



Devon Senior Voice

In Partnership with 



Everyone's Tomorrow

Issue No 26

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The Newsletter of Devon Senior Voice

The organisation keeping older people informed and involved in having a say about services and service delivery in the county

Keep writing to us!



Everyone's Tomorrow is the Devon Senior Voice quarterly magazine. During the last three months the Board were sorry to say goodbye to James Bradley who resigned due to pressure of other commitments, and has welcomed Jose Kimber and Frances Canning as co-optees until the AGM in November. Our members have been busy representing DSV on the Carers Board, The Care Act Service Users focus Group, running a Care Act meeting in Honiton (See P 3), updating and contacting users of Memory Cafes in preparation for our project to engage with those living with dementia and their carers to evaluate the services they receive. **Thank you to all those who have opted to receive their newsletter electronically and we look forward to more of you signing up to this.** The next newsletter is due out in the summer, so please let me have any news or articles by the 15th June for this edition. Many thanks to all our contributors.

Sally Lougher, Editor

A message from our Chairman, Ann McClements



As I write I can see the sun shining , the sky is blue and the Magnolia tree outside the window has a tip of white as the buds think about opening. It's official - Spring is here, and with it, all the promises of "new beginnings".

As we enter the new financial year , what can Devon Senior Voice look forward to? We know we will have less money to spend, a new Government to contend with (even if it is the old one re-vamped) and more Devon County Council cuts . What changes are there for DSV? We have co-opted two new Board members (Jose Kimber and Frances Canning) , so some "new blood". We have started a Task and Finish group to look at the Branch structures and how we can breathe "new life" into some inactive areas of the County. The new Memory Cafe project is seeking to enable those

with Dementia to have a greater voice in their care. We look forward to positive news concerning Charity status which will bring new ways of working. Tackling new things can be disturbing but it also renews our energy and helps us to do some "blue sky thinking ". Please start thinking and let us know what new ways we can embrace in 2015.

Ann McClements, Chairman

Our Achievements since December 2014

SINCE December 2014 Devon Senior Voice has :

- Worked in partnership with other organisations in Teignmouth on a larger Dementia Conference towards the area becoming dementia-friendly (See P. 3)
- Worked in partnership with Healthwatch on an Engagement Project with people Living with dementia and their carers through Memory Cafes
- Participated in nine Healthwatch Gateway requests
- Developed planning for a third Rural Isolation Conference in the west of the county organised by by Tavistock and Okehampton (See P.4)
- Begun planning, in partnership our 3rd Crediton Dementia Awareness Day on 16th September 2015

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Editor's note: The views expressed in these articles and letters in this publication are the opinions of the writers and should in no way be attributed to Devon Senior Voice Board or staff members.



Crediton and Area Branch



At their first meeting of 2015, Crediton and Area Branch of Devon Senior Voice (DSV), met at their new venue, 'The Meadow Suite', Lords Meadow Leisure Centre.

All agreed it was an excellent venue and the staff at the Leisure Centre had been extremely helpful getting things arranged for us. The meeting welcomed Miss Ruth Diggle, who gave a talk about the work of Street Pastors in Barnstaple. Funded and trained by the Ascension Trust in London, these community-minded Christians take it upon themselves to patrol the streets outside night clubs and bars on busy weekend nights. They offer support to young people who are inebriated and may need some help. Their assistance is increasingly being acknowledged and appreciated by pub and club owners, the local police and the ambulance service. At their February meeting, the Branch were treated to a fascinating illustrated talk by local historian and former QE teacher, Judi Binks. Judi's talk centred on Crediton during the First World War. Not only did she make it very relevant to those present, many of whom had been born and

brought up in Mid Devon, but her enthusiasm for and engagement with the material, made it a hugely enjoyable presentation. On Wednesday March 11th, the group will welcome local solicitor, Graham Pilsbury, to talk about 'Enduring Power of Attorney'. A full schedule of interesting and varied presenters is now in place for DSV meetings in 2015. All are welcome. Please contact our membership secretary Pam Healey on 01363 775243 for information about becoming a member or a schedule of the 2015 meetings.

Photos and Article: Paula Kovacs, Secretary, Crediton

Sadly, former committee member of the Crediton and Area branch, Barbara Whiting, passed away shortly before Christmas after a short illness. Her funeral, attended by several members of the Crediton DSV branch, was held on January 13th at the church in Newton St Cyres, the village where she lived until a few months ago. The photo shows her and Ron Cuthbertson having a spontaneous waltz at the 2013 Christmas Buffet. Barbara will be remembered for her boundless energy and enthusiasm. Well into her eighties, she had more spring in her step than many forty year olds! She'll be sadly missed.



Tavistock Branch

Tavistock hosted a meeting on hearing loss in January. The main speaker was Dr Ted Leverton a retired GP with a particular interest in hearing loss. He admitted that he had experienced prejudice because of his hearing loss as some people have accused him of being stupid. He was supported by Alistair Kinsey who runs a hearing and mobility centre in Tavistock. A good number of people with little or no previous contact with the branch were in attendance. We were informed that 55% of people would suffer hearing loss by the age of 60 and 70% by the age of 70. Nine million people have a problem but only 2 ½ million do anything about it. Less actually use their hearing aids with a surprising number keeping their hearing aids in a drawer. Training in the use of equipment is vital as aids cannot just be fitted and forgotten about. The fittings need maintenance but so do ears. It was mentioned that one should not put anything smaller than your elbow in your ear; certainly not drill bits as inserted by an engineer!

There were a number of points which were of particular interest:

1. Hearing aids are free on the NHS. Many do not always realise how many are free,
2. Those with mild hearing loss double their chance of getting dementia. Severe loss makes a diagnosis five times more likely. The reasons are unclear but are worrying. The chances re-

duce when hearing aids are fitted.

3. Treating hearing loss earlier can reduce the chances of ending up in residential care.
4. There are significant potential costs savings if action is taken early.
5. Consonants are the first sounds become lost before vowels and so do those of high pitch.
6. It is always polite to draw the potential listener's attention to the fact that you are about to speak so that they do not miss the initial words.

Anyone concerned to take things further was able to get advice from Action on Hearing Loss tel 0808 808 0123. Also the Action on Hearing Loss website has a facility to carry out a screening test to check hearing levels. This could be particularly useful for those who may be reluctant to see their GP. I tried the test and was encouraged at the result but from the speakers I have learnt that one cannot rest on one's laurels but that I should check my hearing regularly just like any other aspect of health.

Following the success of this event, we are now looking forward to our AGM on Thursday 23rd April when we are to have a speaker on skin cancer which is becoming a particular issue for older people.

Mike Dennis



Honiton Branch

Following a public meeting addressed by NPC National Officer Neil Duncan Jordan (see report) Honiton Senior Voice is now preparing for our General Election Hustings. This will be held take place at the Beehive auditorium, Dowell Street at **2pm on April 10th**. All five parties – Tory, Labour, Lib Dem, Greens and UKIP candidates - for Tiverton and Honiton constituency have agreed to attend and answer questions. The meeting, chaired by Seaton’s Roger Trapani (Chair of East Devon Senior Voice) is open to anyone in the constituency; Senior Voice members and groups are warmly welcome. Questions should be forwarded before the meeting.

Questions about health and care issues, and the impact of cuts and rationing, can be expected to be raised at the hustings as they were at our joint meeting with NPC.

Other priorities include NHS pressures, local hospitals, bus pass and universal benefits, fuel poverty and the future for services such as libraries. Honiton reps recently held a useful exchange with Devon County Council Customer Manager for Libraries when we expressed our reservations about over reliance on volunteers and ‘localism’ run libraries and the necessity of an integrated professional library system. Threats to local libraries, as with those affecting local hospitals, have featured in our joint meetings and demonstrate the importance of DSV groups in East Devon working together as we have been doing under Roger Trapani’s leadership at regular meetings hosted by Honiton.

We are continuing to be vigilant about members affected by current NHS cuts and rationing. Honiton’s successful resolution opposing the proposed suspension of medical treatment (NEW Devon CCG) at DSV/AGM, showed that the voice of members is vital and can affect policies. Like-

wise pressure on our MP Neil Parish resulted in a constructive meeting in which the MP agreed to pursue our concerns about privatisation of non emergency hospital transport.

Honiton Senior Voice is in the process of auditing its membership records during which we have discovered a significant number of members unable or not wishing to use using computer technology. A local senior has written to Mid Week Herald (25 Feb) raising serious issues about those affected by the continued pressure by public bodies to restrict access and information to online services. The letter – headlined ‘feeling marginalised by computer technology’ also refers to the impacts of ‘exasperation and humiliation’ in later life. May we suggest this be dis-



cussed by the Board of DSV and Assembly?

Tony Simpson

Photograph: Bob Williams

Culm Valley Branch

Since I became Chair of Devon Senior Voice, the group in the Culm Valley has been inactive. However that does not mean that nothing has been happening. Members have been kept in touch with news (a twice yearly letter) and Gateway requests if they are on email, and news only if they rely on post.

We have started a very successful “Memory Cafe” at the Cullompton Community Centre on the 4th Weds of each month. Six members of the Culm Valley Senior Voice run the Cafe with an input from Upstream on a regular basis. Recently the town Council has taken over the John Tallack Youth Centre (behind the Sports Centre) from DCC. They

have formed a Community Interest Organisation. The trustees are currently concentrating on ensuring that a youth service continues to run, but they are keen to use the Centre during daytime, so we are hoping to restart our games afternoon in the near future.

I am also sitting on the Neighbourhood Planning Committee and the Patients Group for College Surgery. I have urged you all on many occasions to make your voices heard. If you want to have your say, please contact me – better still, make some suggestions to revive the Culm Valley group.

Ann McClements

Can You Help?

Devon Senior Voice is anxious to find among its membership someone with the skills to assist our part-time staff with the website—keeping it up to date, adding information and interesting links

A New DSV Branch for Lynton and Lynmouth?



We all travelled to the United Reformed Church at Lynton, through heavy rain and flooded roads to meet a group of people from Lynton who had gathered for the first Devon Senior Voice meeting. There were 25 people attending the event, with Brian Clifton and Sue Lycett, and myself from the Barnstaple Branch. We kept our fingers crossed that the speakers would survive the journey across the hills and valleys between Barnstaple and Lynton, the roads were more like lakes.

The speakers were Kerry Burton from the Clinical Commissioning Group, Nellie Guttman from the North Devon District Hospital, and Jacki Footman who came to show us 'Emotional Freedom Techniques' arrive dripping wet but smiling. After a cup of coffee they were happy to address the meeting.

Kerry Burton told the meeting about changes planned in the provision of Health Care in our region. Care Closer to Home will affect the way that Health and Social Care is delivered, providing more care in people's homes. She outlined plans to keep people out of hospital unless absolutely necessary, and then only staying in hospital for the shortest time possible. She discussed the urgent and necessary measures brought in by NEW Devon CCG and there were many questions about this. She made it clear that these measures applied to people who were receiving 'elective' treatments, that is the treatment that is planned several months ahead. Asking someone to lose a bit of weight, or to stop smoking before an operation does not amount to 'rationing' care, which was the impression generally understood initially.

Nellie Guttman told us the details of a Care Quality Commission inspection recently undertaken at NDDH. Some departments were rated as very good, some needed improvement. A very interested audience asked questions for an hour and both the speakers, and the people attending, had a very stimulating two-way conversation.

Jacki Footman then began by giving everybody a small

chocolate bar. Unfortunately, as it was nearing lunchtime, some people ate it, which was not the intention. Jacki explained that her Techniques were a



method to help people from stopping cravings for food, chocolate, smoking, by touching parts of their body. She asked people to give a mark out of 10, how much they wanted the chocolate bar. Then she asked the audience to touch parts of their hands, head, neck, shoulders and more. After 5 minutes she asked people to score again how much they craved the chocolate and the results were really interesting. Some people did not want the chocolate at all, but maybe this may have been due to the smells of lunch coming from the kitchen.

We all enjoyed a hot lunch during which more questions were asked of the speakers. It was a valuable engagement and several people joined Devon Senior Voice. By the time we left Lynton the sun was shining and the 'lakes' across the roads were reduced to puddles. We plan to have another meeting in Lynton, this time on a sunny day in July.

Carol McCormack Hole, Barnstaple

West Devon Branches Rural Isolation Event

Okehampton and Tavistock Branches of Devon Senior Voice are joining forces to organise a Rural Isolation Conference in West Devon. It will be held on Thursday 11th June 2015 in Bridestowe Village Hall which is half way between the two Towns.

There will be speakers on what isolation means especially in the villages which can be caused by lack of transport. Isolation can also be caused by being by not being involved in the local community through being hard of hearing, loss of sight, physical disabilities and dementia.

We will be highlighting how to overcome some of these difficulties with contributions from Speakers and Organisations on how to combat problems that arise. There will also be Information Stands so that you can talk to members of the organisations personally. Come and learn how

Neighbourhood Watch operates, what Farm Watch entails and is there a Neighbourhood Health Watch in your area. Do you know what the Sensory Bus is?

With Budget Cuts and lack of Funding, Care in the Community is becoming an necessary factor in our daily lives and learning how to look out for the elderly and vulnerable members of our society is important.

As the Conference runs all day a light Buffet Lunch will be provided at a small cost for which bookings are requested. If you would more information or feel you can contribute to the day please contact Ann Crawford on tel: 01837 840 562 or e-mail arc.southtawton@virgin.net.

Ann R. Crawford

Newton Abbot Volunteers Help To Research The Needs Of The 'Elderly Frail'



VOLUNTEERS from the Newton Abbot & District branch of Devon Senior Voice are involved in distributing a survey designed to help health commissioners understand the needs of older people and their carers living in the Newton Abbot area.

The branch is circulating copies of the two-part survey drawn up by the South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to a wide range of outlets.

The Patient Survey is for anyone over 65, living independently, but for whom an illness or fall, for example, would be a significant challenge to cope with.

The Carer/Relative Survey is for anyone caring for, or a relative of, someone in the first category.

Nigel Child, branch treasurer, said: 'We are very pleased to be involved in this survey, as its results will provide the CCG with the information to help them shape an improved frailty service, under which the health, care and voluntary sectors work better together to help frail older people in the locality live well and independently.

'We want to spread the word about this survey via the local networks so that it reaches as many people as possible. 'It will only take a few minutes to complete which-

ever part of the survey is relevant to you, or both if appropriate.'

The frailty service is provided to patients of Albany, Buckland, Cricketfield, Devon Square, Kingsteignton and Kingskerswell and Ipplepen medical practices.

Solveig Sansom, the CCG's head of commissioning for integration, said: 'We're really pleased to have the support of Devon Senior Voice with the development of this service.

'The information they will be able to provide us with will help us understand people's hopes and fears and what is important to them in how they manage week to week. That insight will be a crucial part of our understanding of whether the frailty service is on the right track and the effect it is having.'

Anyone wanting to obtain a copy of the survey should contact Devon Senior Voice on 01803 732678 or email info@devonseniorvoice.org or download the survey from www.devonseniorvoice.org

Seaton and Area Branch

Steve Budden who is one of the pharmacists at the Colyton Pharmacy came to the "Heads Up" Stroke Group that we support. He had already been a speaker at one of our Devon Senior Voice meetings but that was mainly to talk about his role as a Dementia Champion. He did touch briefly on the services available at his pharmacy and we thought this might be useful to the stroke survivors and their carers at the "Heads Up" coffee morning.

He said that pharmacy services are an under-utilised resource and that the training undertaken allows pharmacists to undertake all kinds of checks that patients do not then have to go to the doctor's surgery for.

Some examples are Blood pressure checks, diabetes checks, reviews of medication as well as the better known arrangements for repeat prescriptions. Even the latter has a benefit as a watch is kept on drugs that should only be prescribed for a limited period or for any sign that a patient is not ordering some medication that should be taken all the time.

Blood Pressure Checks

This quick, simple test which is free of charge would be available every 12 months (if reading as normal) or 6 monthly if a patient had chronic cardio vascular signs.

Diabetes Check

Again a very simple test, after fasting, which is just a finger tip check. Diabetes is quite often symptom free at first and early diagnosis is important. As with the blood pressure check, if any worrying signs show up the patient would then be advised to see their GP.

Other Services

At the Colyton Pharmacy there are many helpful services. They prefer to undertake the medication check face to face but can do this by phone if patients are not able to get to the pharmacy. Some home visits are made by Steve or his brother who are licensed to undertake this service. They do receive funding for this service although this is based on a 15 minute review which means they do not get funding for the travelling to the home visits.

Steve also told us about the help they can give with finding a wide variety of aids for making life easier and they undertake the delivery to patients as well.

They run a number of clinics, for example, stop smoking clinics, travel clinics, correct use of inhaler clinics and they are also part of a new scheme – the winter ailments scheme - which allows them to prescribe medications without prescription for some conditions, even free of charge to those who are exempt.

Although Steve was talking about the Colyton Pharmacy, he made it quite clear that many of the services he described were available at most other pharmacies and he encouraged us all to find out what is on offer at our own outlets. He said it can save not just unnecessary visits to the doctor but even sometimes having to go to hospital.

Tina Trapani, Secretary, Seaton

Teignmouth Branch Launches Recruitment Drive



THE Teignmouth, Shaldon & Bishopsteignton branch launched a major recruitment drive in March for new members to help it achieve its plans.

The branch is already working in partnership with others to hold a dementia awareness event later this year that will start a campaign to ensure that the district becomes 100 per cent dementia-friendly.

Teignmouth members are also pressing for the creation of a one-stop centre where older people can enjoy social and recreational activities, and can also access welfare, medical and advice services.

The branch is also keen to foster the development of good-quality community projects to replace public services that have been lost to cuts in local authority budgets in Teignmouth and the surrounding area, and support the survival of others where redevelopment may threaten their security of tenure. For example, pressure from interested branch members can ensure that a centre for the arts survives in any Brunswick Street development.

Branch chairman Jim Corben said: 'Voluntary groups such as us face new and greater challenges over the next three to five years in a climate of further financial austerity and

cutbacks in public services.

'We require new blood to strengthen our committee, along with a growing number of willing volunteers to respond to these challenges, which probably can only be fully met through collaboration between relevant local organisations.'

Mr Corben said that the branch had spent its first seven years energetically gathering and voicing the opinions of local over-50s on health and wellbeing and other policy and planning development matters.

It had also maintained a valuable series of monthly open information forums on health, welfare and social issues led by informed and popular local speakers.

'We have produced an attractive leaflet that branch volunteers will be dropping through doors throughout the district inviting people to take an active part in our campaign,' said Mr Corben. 'There are many retired or semi-retired older people with the interest, experience and skills to help us and others get some of these really worthwhile projects off the ground. Together we can be stronger and get things done!'

Fuel Poverty - a New Strategy

For the first time in 14 years a new strategy on Fuel Poverty has been launched, it aims to:-

- improve energy efficiency standards in fuel poor homes;
- work together to help the fuel poor through partnership and learning;
- increase effective targeting of fuel poor households; improve the support to certain high cost homes – such as non-gas or park homes;
- improve the support to certain low income households – such as those who have health conditions linked to living in a cold home;
- tackle the financial burden of energy bills for those on low incomes;
- ensure the fuel poor are able to get maximum benefit from a fair and functioning energy market;
- enhance and improve understanding of fuel poverty.

Despite fuel poverty being with us for centuries, it was only in 2001 that there was a legal definition; "a household is fuel poor if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income (measured before housing costs) on energy in the home". This is to change to

"A household is fuel poor if it:

has an income below the poverty line (including if meeting its required energy bill would push it below the poverty line); and has higher than typical energy costs.

Although no definition of poverty line has been set, currently over 5 million households are fuel poor. Both in the past and in the future the most important help to avert fuel poverty lies in the voluntary sector.

In 1811 through an Act of Parliament the first charity to combat

fuel poverty was launched, not in the emerging industrial towns, but along the banks of the Thames at Richmond, it still exists and last year made 1,800 grants to the residents of six parishes in Richmond.

Further back in time around 926 a young Duke of Bohemia was observing St Steven's day with a feast and merriment when he noticed something moving by the forest fence; St Steven's day was the most important feast day other than Easter in the early mediaeval calendar and no one should be about, but there was someone gathering fallen twigs and branches; the Duke decided to do something about this. Five years after his death at the hands of his brother in 935 he was canonised for his good acts, (his brother, however, was labelled "the cruel"); two hundred years later he was accorded the status of King by Otto the First, Holy Roman Emperor (962-973). We are all reminded of the Duke's deeds each Christmas with the carol "Good King Wenceslas".

Where does this fit in with Senior Voice? For the last three months DSV has been looking at Social Enterprises with a view to enabling greater income; the possibility of doing something about fuel poverty has been researched and we have been accepted on a one year course with the School for Social Enterprise with training and mentors from Lloyds Bank and Price Waterhouse Cooper to develop and launch "The Wenceslas Project" to be continued.

Ken Crawford, Okehampton



Devon County Council Announces Plans To Upgrade A30/A303



A SECOND major road link into Devon and Cornwall could be built under plans by Devon County Council (DCC).

The Government has said it will back the £220m scheme to upgrade the A30/A303 from Ilminster in Somerset to Honiton. The work, which would begin in 2020, involves a series of six improvement schemes along the A30/A303 through the Blackdown Hills, which are environmentally protected as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

At a meeting in late February the transport minister John Hayes welcomed the joint work by DCC and the Blackdowns AONB to develop improvement proposals that are sensitive to the area's special environmental importance.

DCC leader Cllr John Hart said: 'This meeting with the minister was an important milestone in delivering vital improvements to the A303/A30 that will meet the needs of local people and businesses in the Blackdowns, and ultimately create a resilient second strategic route into the South West peninsula.

'We want this to become a national exemplar of how strategic road improvements can be built in a way that is truly sensitive to the needs of the environment. The minister was clear that it is also his aim and he gave a clear commitment that Department for Transport and Highways Agency staff will work closely now with Devon and the Blackdowns AONB to take this forward.

"We have put forward bite-sized options for improvements to the A303/A30 through the Blackdowns in line with local public consultation responses and the Government's commitment in the Road Investment Strategy to smaller scale improvements.

'These include overtaking lanes, improvements to junctions,

visibility and softening of tight bends. These would allow the speed limit to be increased to 60mph and considerably improve road safety.'

Three options were presented on how to progress the smaller-scale work to develop additional overtaking lanes and junction improvements. These are:

A £50 million relief road around the village of Monkton, which currently imposes a 40mph speed limit.

A £90 million scheme that includes the Monkton relief road, as well as additional improvements between the top of Rawridge Hill and Stopgate Cross junction, which is likely to involve a short bypass of Newcott.

A £120 million option, again including a Monkton relief road, but with more extensive improvements at Rawridge Hill through to the A30/A303 junction at Devonshire Inn. This provides a longer section of continuous improvement and includes a more challenging section at Rawridge Hill.

Public consultation on a preferred route will be held in the coming financial year, with detailed designs prepared in 2019. The aim is for work to start in 2020-21, opening in 2022.

The Government also plans to carry out dualling, including tunnels, to the A303 at Stonehenge between Amesbury and Berwick Down, dualling between Sparkford and Ilchester and dualling of the A358 between Southfields and Taunton.

Geoffrey Sworder, of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, said: 'They have to be careful they do it in a way that will not only improve the traffic but recognise the importance of the countryside they are going through.

'You could soon destroy an area of natural beauty by running great big busy roads through the middle of them.'

But the big question is what will happen after the general election in May. With a significant budget deficit still to be tackled, and all the main parties saying more spending cuts are going to be needed, will there be sufficient money, and political will, for road schemes like this when other public services could be facing severe cutbacks?

Devon Air Ambulance Trust to benefit from bankers' fines

THE Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) is one of several air-ambulance charities in the UK set to benefit from a £5 million fund from Libor fines*.

The charity will receive £250,000 from the fund, which will contribute towards the cost of equipment needed for night flying in 2016.

Heléna Holt, chief executive of DAAT, said: 'We were delighted with the news that the charity will receive such a large sum of money from the Libor fund. This sum will go a long way in helping us to secure the extension of our flying hours up to midnight every day from 2016.'

The funding was confirmed in February at a meeting between the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne and the Association of Air Ambulances, whose charity will distribute the money among the 20 local air-ambulance charities set to benefit.

Mr Osborne said: 'From enabling the fantastic air-ambulance services to extend their flying hours, to helping build brand-new specialist headquarters, this funding will

play a vital role in helping to save hundreds of lives every year. It is absolutely right that we use funds from those who demonstrated the worst values to reward those who demonstrate the best, like our hardworking air-ambulance crews.'

**The Libor scandal was a series of fraudulent actions connected to the Libor (London Interbank Offered Rate) and also the resulting investigation and reaction. The Libor is an average interest rate calculated through submissions of interest rates by major banks in London. The scandal arose when it was discovered that banks were falsely inflating or deflating their rates so as to profit from trades, or to give the impression that they were more creditworthy than they were.*



'What I do matters'



As you will all be aware during the last six months, Devon Senior Voice has focussed much of its attention on the CARE ACT 2014. This now comes into effect on 1st April 2015. DSV has prepared information leaflets, held meetings to give information on the Act, and responded to requests by Devon County Council to consult on many parts of the Act that have direct relevance to older people. In particular we have, answered surveys, been to focus groups and had a voice into Assessments – particularly for Carers, Care and Support Planning, Deferred Payments, information dissemination, and Safeguarding. As these areas of the Care Act come into force it is important that DSV continues to measure the impact on services for individuals, especially for Carers and those they care for. Please stay alert and report on the changes and how they affect you.

One of the fundamental principles of the Care Act is that of Wellbeing -

“Local Authorities must promote wellbeing when carrying out any of their care and support functions.”

They have to measure all their actions against a set of nine principles which are about the individual and his/her independence.

–personal dignity

-physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- protection from abuse and neglect
-control by the individual over day-to-day life (including care and support provided and the way it is provided).

- participation in work, education, training or recreation

- social and economic wellbeing

-domestic, family and personal relationships

-suitability of living accommodation

-the individuals' contribution to society

DSV would like to look at this theme of “Wellbeing” for the next six months until September. We will concentrate on how you and I as individuals can take responsibility for promoting our personal wellbeing. The next Assembly on 16th June will have speakers on different aspects of our life in which we can enhance our physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing, protect ourselves from abuse and neglect and take more individual control. Wellbeing is difficult to measure as it means many different things to each of us, but if we gain a better understanding of our own wellbeing, then we should be better prepared for any change of circumstances in the future.

Ann McClements, Chairman

Report urges the government to establish a special forum to share rural best prac-

The recommendation to develop the Rural Proofing Forum was made in a key report at the end of January by Lord Ewen Cameron of Dillington.

Lord Cameron has been examining the way the government ensures its policies don't have a detrimental impact on rural communities.

One of Devon Senior Voice's criticisms of the Care Act 2014 was that the new law had failed to take account of the particular care needs of people in the countryside. Setting up a rural-proofing forum would help share best practice, information and key messages across government, said Lord Cameron.

The recommendation is significant because Lord Cameron is a former chairman of the now-defunct Countryside Agency. He was also the government's rural advocate from 2000 to 2004.

There was a 'renewed emphasis' on rural proofing at 'very senior levels' in government, said the crossbench peer in his report. But this was not always the case at departmental level.

'Generally, I found that there was a good awareness of rural issues at ministerial and senior official level,' said Lord Cameron.

'Departments seemed, however, genuinely unaware of the value of describing and commenting on the rural dimensions to their policy interventions.'

He said that several departments could improve their

narrative and reputation for rural proofing.

'Quite often, it isn't that rural proofing isn't being undertaken, it is more often the case that it is not being clearly described in key policy documents,' he said.

'What I believe rural stakeholders really want is a more interactive forum to discuss rural proofing; a place to share evidence, best practice and discuss rural proofing issues and ideas.'

Many rural people had enthusiastically embraced and regularly used social media, Lord Cameron continued.

'Defra should therefore provide an online forum for routine discussion of rural issues,' he said.

'It should do so by creating a place to describe best practice – at a local to national scale – and a means to test policy options during their design and implementation.' This would highlight what government departments were undertaking on rural issues, while providing a platform for discussion and to exchange ideas.

Responding to the report, the secretary of state Liz Truss said it was clear that 'sensible and practical changes' would enable the government to 'mainstream' rural issues within policy making.

Describing such a move as creating a 'real game changer', she added: 'I will give Lord Cameron's recommendations my full and considered attention.'

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/400695/rural-proofing-imp-review-2015.pdf

Watch out for Pension Scams



On the 6th April the biggest shake-up of pensions in a century takes effect. The government's new pension freedom offers plenty of new opportunities for scammers.

Pension liberation scams are almost certain to be the scam story of 2015.

That's because scammers are always attuned to what's going on in the world and opportunities to make easy money.

Pension rule changes

From 6th April, you will be free to do as you like with your personal pension pot once you reach 55.

You can spend it on a luxury cruise; you can leave it in the fund to (hopefully) grow.

Or you can switch funds and fund managers in the expectation of either a safer or more aggressive investment stance.

You can even opt for the traditional annuity, accepting the poor return as a swap for the total security it gives for the rest of your life and perhaps for the remainder of your partner's life as well.

For many of the 350,000 – 400,000 who come up to retirement age each year with a personal pot, it will be the first time they have ever had to make such a serious financial decision. The government has promised to offer free guidance, though it's still unclear what this will consist of, what advisers will be able to charge the state for their services and whether it will really help.

Ripe for scams

This uncertainty presents a golden opportunity for scammers. Already they will be tracking down the contact details of those in the retirement age bracket.

Here's what to expect if you're one of the 'lucky' ones to receive a call from them.

'It's in your hands!'

Expect the fraudsters to emphasise that a great retirement is in your hands. The traditional annuity purchase route offered poor value, so the government ended it. Now a financially savvy person like you can make a much smarter decision about what to do with your pension pot and end up far richer. And you certainly don't need to make use of the government's advice service.

They won't struggle to conjure up a couple of quotes from

the financial press about how unfit for purpose it is.

A great 'guaranteed' return.

Now here comes the patter. There will be talk of wonderful investments which offer a 'guaranteed' return of 15 – 20% a year, far better than anything else you'll be offered through traditional investment routes.

Chances are there will be something 'exotic' about these investments, whether it's buying up land in Brazil or a stake in a gold mine. But no matter how risky they may sound, they will all be absolutely certain winners.

And the scammers will emphasise that they must be legit as HM Revenue & Customs has no problem with you placing these investments in your pension. Of course, outside of residential property there is very little that is not approved for a personal pension.

Time for the transfer

The next stage will be convincing you to transfer your pension pot into a self-invested pension (SIPP) that accepts the sham 'investment'. You'll hear plenty of talk about how this will avoid the tax which would otherwise be levied, were the fund's proceeds to be withdrawn rather than transferred.

This is where you will be sent the paperwork, which will either be totally fraudulent or will reveal in the small print that you are being charged hundreds of times the real value of whatever 'asset' it is that you are investing in.

Rinse and repeat

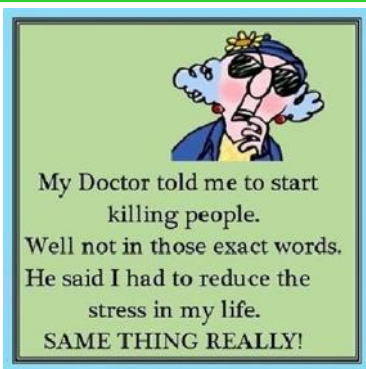
By the time you realise you've been had, the scammer and his firm will be long gone. But there will be other firms with similar names, offering similar deals, targeting those nearing retirement.

Don't let 2015 be a happy year for those pension liberation scammers.

Spotting a Pensions Scam:

- **Watch out for phrases like 'legal loopholes', 'cash bonus' or 'government endorsement'**
- **Genuine companies shouldn't be cold-calling—whether over the phone or on your doorstep**
- **Being encouraged to transfer money quickly to new schemes**
- **You cannot access your pension pot before 55**
- **Before signing anything call DSV or the Pension Advisory Service for guidance 0300 123 1047**

To make you smile....

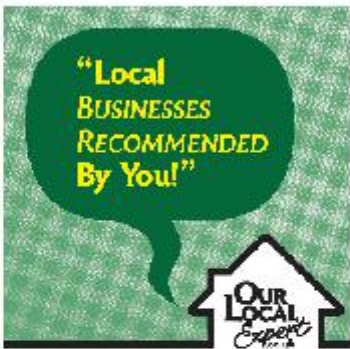




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The Mede, Topsham

A holiday home in Topsham called The Mede that supports people living with dementia and offers a specialist activity club next door, was recently selected as a finalist in the business category for The Alzheimer's Society "Dementia Friendly Awards".

With recent news that the number of people with dementia could triple by 2050, there is an ever more pressing need for facilities that offer support.

Sallie Rutledge, mother of three, opened The Mede five years' ago to enable carers and their loved ones to have holidays, after her own father in law was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. This year she has also acquired the next door bungalow, Seaward House, to run day time activities for people with dementia in the local area but also available for those staying on holiday at The Mede.

Sallie, a qualified nurse who works part time as a practice nurse in a local health centre, said: "The Mede seemed an ideal place also for an activity day club. All too often, people living with dementia don't leave their own homes but of course this can lead to them feeling isolated and lonely. It also gives the carer a much needed day off."

"The Mede is set up as holiday accommodation, it has a home from home feel which immediately makes visitors less anxious about being out of their comfort zone. It's extremely practical and very welcoming. It has three bedrooms and sleeps 5 people, has a wet room and is all on one level. Carers can be organised for helping with personal care and a sit in service. Although it is self catering accommodation, meals can be organised and help with shopping or trips out can be arranged."

Although there is no cure for memory loss, deterioration can be slowed down through the use of trusted methods, and in the

activity club next door sessions include activities that stimulate memory, such as word and number games, current affairs and creative sessions. In addition, visitors to the Mede activity club will be encouraged to get out and about.

The activity club at The Mede, which is not far from Exeter, explained the thinking behind the new centre: "There's a lack for of facilities for people when they first learn they have dementia, which is exactly the time that activity and stimulation is required. Activity days like this allow them to meet with others in the same position, which gives reassurance and mutual support."

"It looks increasingly possible that numbers of council-run day centres may face closure for one reason or another, so there is a real need for independently run centres to fill the gap."

The activity day club is now open on Mondays and Tuesdays 10am to 4pm (not bank holidays).

For more information about having a holiday or using the day club please contact Sallie on 07718976072 or sallie.rutledge@yahoo.co.uk





If you are interested in advertising in the Senior Voice magazine, please contact Sally on 01803 732678 or email info@devonseniorvoice.org

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Pager with trickle charger



The Sign Wave Flashing



Person to person alert



Pillow/Bed Shaker



Floor/ Bed/Chair Sensor



Movement Sensor



Smoke Detector



Carbon Monoxide Detector

For more information contact your telecare service provider

News from Healthwatch Devon—Joining up health and social care



With a general election looming, the NHS is firmly in the headlines. But we can be pretty sure that the next government - whoever it is led by - will be talking a lot about "integration" of health and social care services.

An ageing population means more people with conditions such as stroke, heart disease and dementia. All the main political parties want to see people with long term health and care needs being kept out of hospitals and care homes, and looked after at home for as long as possible.

But looking after people in their own homes means that health services, care services and social services need to work very closely together. They need to co-ordinate visits and they need to share information. They may even need to pool budgets. This is what health and care professionals call "integration".

Two recent pieces of work by Healthwatch Devon show that joining up working between health and care services may be easier said than done.

Our Long Term Conditions survey heard from 500 people across Devon. Less than half considered the sharing of information between health and care services to be done

well. And nearly 1 in 3 considered it to be done badly. Our Leaving Hospital survey heard from 300 people. Over a quarter said that health and care professionals did not communicate well with one another.

We have sent our findings to health services managers to help them think about how services could be improved. On the plus side, Living Options Devon has been developing a Personal Assistant scheme to help people to take some control over their combined health and social care support.

One person involved with the scheme said, 'I had one agency; they promised me a maximum of 4 people coming to provide my care. Within a 4 week period, over 18 people had come in and out. It was not working. Then, I was supported to recruit and employ my own Personal Assistants. It is great, I know who is coming when, it is much more flexible and I know they have the right training. I would not change it!'

Integrating health and care services is a huge challenge for all concerned. And it is clear that health and care managers will need to listen carefully to patients, and to think hard about what life is like on the receiving end.

**Freephone
0800 520 0640**

Pharmacy First makes it easier to get treatment for Minor Ailments

COMMUNITY pharmacists across Devon are stepping up support for people who suffer minor and winter ailments, to make it easier and quicker to get help.

They are even able to provide some medicines that are usually only available on prescription, to save on a trip to the doctor.

The scheme, known as Pharmacy First, is designed to make healthcare more accessible than ever this winter. In turn, that should ease pressure on GPs, enabling them to spend more time with patients who have more-serious conditions.

After being tried in western Devon last year, Pharmacy First now covers nearly the whole county. Funding is due to run until next spring, when the impact will be reviewed.

The two main elements are:

1 Winter ailments

Go along to your pharmacy for advice and medication to combat coughs, colds, sore throats, fever, earache, teething, diarrhoea, blocked nose, headache and similar conditions. Over-the-counter medicines can be dispensed free of charge for those who are exempt from prescription payments.

2 Minor illnesses

Pharmacists can now prescribe medicines that would usually require a doctor's authorisation, in order to treat a

range of common conditions:

- bacterial conjunctivitis
- impetigo
- nappy rash
- female urinary tract infection
- oral candidiasis



The project has been developed by Devon Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC), Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group, and NHS England.

David Bearman, Chair of Devon LPC, said: "Pharmacists are highly-trained professionals who are willing and able to help if you get one of these minor illnesses. You don't need an appointment – just drop in and you can be out again in just a few minutes with the medication and advice you need. We've all got consulting rooms, so it can all be done in complete privacy."

Pharmacists have longer opening hours than GP practices, you don't need an appointment to see one, and most have a consultation area where you can speak privately. They'll also tell you if they think you should see your GP.

News from NEW Devon CCG



You may be aware that Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (NEW Devon CCG), the organisation responsible for buying healthcare services on your behalf, launched an Involvement and Consultation period on 17 September 2014, following the release of a set of proposed commissioning intentions for community services, including community hospitals. A 12 week involvement and consultation period followed this and closed on 12 December 2014 for the Northern and Western localities of Devon. The period was extended for the Eastern area of Devon until 24 February 2015.

We have published a report of what people and communities told us during this period for each of Northern and Western localities already. The Eastern locality report will be available from 19 March 2015. You can find these on the CCG website www.newdevonccg.nhs.uk, under Your CCG and each of the 3 locality pages, or you can telephone 01392 356 103 to ask for a paper copy to be posted to you.

These reports will be discussed and reviewed at each locality board meeting over the coming months, where the next steps will be discussed and agreed.

Help the local NHS by choosing the right service

Following a busy winter, and the lead up to the Easter break, Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group has issued some tips to help people choose the right NHS service:

- Try your family or self-care - for minor illnesses, combine medicines for coughs, colds or flu with plenty of rest.
- Pharmacies - pharmacists are trained to help people with minor illnesses and can advise on medicine that can be bought over the counter. Your nearest pharmacy can be found here: www.nhs.uk.
- NHS 111 – for non-emergency health needs, 24 hours a day, as well as help to find services. Go to www.nhs.uk or call 111.
- NHS minor injuries unit (MIU) - for treatment of minor illnesses or injuries, without an appointment. For details of your nearest MIU, go to www.nhs.uk.
- Your GP surgery provides a wide range of health services, including: advice on health problems, vaccinations, examinations and treatment, prescriptions for medicines, referrals to other health services and social services. Your surgery will make sure you get to speak to a healthcare professional on the same day if you have an urgent condition.
- Hospital emergency departments or 999 – please only attend hospital emergency departments if you have an immediate and serious problem that cannot be dealt with by the other services. 999 is only for critical or life-threatening situations.

Reducing your risk of stroke

Did you know someone in the UK has a stroke every three and a half minutes? No-one can prepare for a stroke, it happens in an instant but its effects can last a lifetime. Yet too many people still don't understand the impact of stroke or the fact that it can happen to anyone at any age.

Stroke is one of the biggest health challenges of our time. A stroke is a brain attack which happens when the blood supply to the brain is cut off, caused by a clot or bleeding in the brain. There are around 2,600 strokes in Devon every year and it is the leading cause of severe adult disability.

There are over 20,000 people in the county living with the effects of stroke. Stroke is complex and can result in a range of longer-term problems that people might continue to face after they leave hospital, such as:

Cognitive problems

Communication problems; around a third of all stroke survivors will have aphasia, a problem with speech, reading and writing

Emotional problems, including depression

Fatigue,

Physical problems, including mobility, spasms and visual problems

Many people believe that strokes only happen to older people and it is a fact that the risk of having a stroke doubles every decade after the age of 55. However, what it isn't so well known is that a quarter of all strokes happen

to people under the age of 55 and there are 400 childhood strokes each year.

Having a stroke is not inevitable; up to 80% of all strokes could be prevented. There are many factors that can increase your risk of stroke, including:

your genes

your age

your diet

the amount of alcohol you drink

whether you smoke

how fit you are,

whether you have any other medical conditions, most commonly High Blood Pressure, Atrial Fibrillation and diabetes mellitus

Simple changes to your lifestyle can make a difference; for example moderate exercise can reduce your risk of stroke by up to 27%. So to reduce your risk of stroke, adopt a healthy diet, take regular exercise and get an annual health check with your GP, which should include Blood Pressure and Atrial Fibrillation checks.

The Stroke Association is a charity that offers information, advice and support for stroke survivors and their families.

They also carry out stroke research and campaign to improve stroke care. For more information and advice you can visit the Stroke Association website www.stroke.org.uk or call The Stroke Helpline (0303 303 3100).

Whitehall 'Does Not Understand The Impact of Spending Cuts', Says Spending Watchdog



Whitehall officials have inflicted deep public spending cuts without fully understanding their impact on services, according to a report in the *Western Morning News* in March.

Auditor General Sir Amyas Morse, head of the National Audit Office (NAO), said that 'radical surgery' had been carried out as part of the Government's austerity programme without officials knowing 'where the heart was'.

He suggested that an 'optimism bias' within David Cameron's administration had led to ministers pressing ahead with reforms to services like the NHS with limited discussion of the potential risks.

Sir Amyas told the *Financial Times*: 'If you're going to do

radical surgery, it would be nice if you knew where the heart was. You're slightly more likely not to stick a knife in it by mistake.'

The NAO boss, who reports directly to Parliament rather than the Government, pointed to cuts to local authority budgets that had resulted in a reduction in money available for social care, with knock-on effects on the NHS. 'Now if you're going to go through much deeper, more profound organisational cuts . . . you need to understand what you're doing better than that,' he said.

Whitehall civil servants had 'a responsibility to be much better informed at the centre' about the impact of reforms, rather than leaving local government to deal with the fallout, he said.

Are Extra Powers Needed To Protect The Postal Service In Rural Areas?

GREATER powers may be needed to maintain a universal postal service to rural areas, MPs have warned.

The universal service obligation ensures postal deliveries are available to all parts of the UK, rural and urban, at the same cost and to the same standard.

Various organisations – including the Devon-based Rural Services Network, trade unions and the Countryside Alliance – have highlighted the importance of the obligation and campaigned for its retention.

That view has now been supported by MPs sitting on the House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) select committee.

In a report published in March they said that the universal service was not under immediate threat, but they warned this could change in a rapidly changing postal market.

Committee chairman Labour MP Adrian Bailey said: 'The universal postal service is available to everyone living in every part of the United Kingdom.

'It is an essential service to many people, especially those living in rural areas, to those less able to travel, to older people, and also to blind and partially-sighted people.'

Ofcom needed to outline in more detail how it would respond quickly to changes in postal market conditions that

may endanger the universal service obligation, said Mr Bailey.

Ofcom had a difficult role in ensuring that the provision of a universal service was both financially sustainable and efficient.

As competition increases, the statutory remit of Ofcom may need to change.

Ofcom must recognise its over-riding obligation to ensure the protection of the universal service and, if necessary, there should be changes in the regulatory framework to enable it to do so.

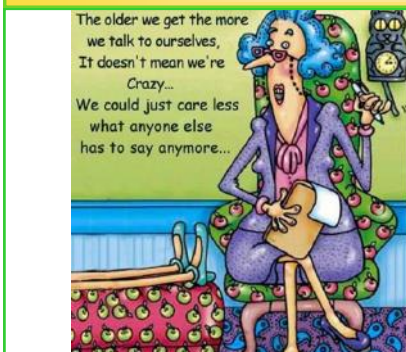
Mr Bailey said: 'The postal sector is changing quickly, with declining volumes of letters, and a sharp increase in parcel volume arising from the rapid growth of internet shopping.

'Ofcom is required to perform a fine balancing act between ensuring the minimum standards of the universal service are maintained while encouraging a competitive market in the postal sector.'

But the BIS Committee was clear that while competition should not be stifled, the fundamental principle of the universal service must be upheld.

Tim Hall, Publicity

To make you smile....again



Devon's Library Service To Go 'Mutual'



Devon's entire library service is to be turned into an independent organisation in a bid to save a further £1.5m by April 2016.

Devon County Council (DCC) has already shaved £3 million off its library-service budget over the past three years, but all of the county's libraries will remain open and continue to be managed by professional library staff. In February the authority approved £46m of cuts for 2015–16 after a drop in government funding. In March county councillors approved plans for a community-owned 'mutual' that would be commissioned by DCC to run the library service on its behalf.

Cllr Roger Croad, cabinet member with responsibility for the library service, said: 'Creating a new independent organisation to run our library service will ensure it remains the dynamic and vibrant service at the heart of community life that our residents value so much. 'Our library service is recognised as one of the most innovative in the country, providing services that support health and wellbeing, children's attainment and economic growth in the county. This plan builds on our recent successes and gives the library service the opportunity to grow rather than contract at a time of significant austerity.

'We've welcomed support from communities, and come up with a plan that not only secures a strong and sustainable future for the service, but also means communities can be much more actively involved in their local library by supporting and improving the services they offer.

'I'm encouraged by the success of the ongoing community pilot programme that is underway and already beginning to show the benefits of greater community involvement in the library service. By

working together we can achieve the modern, high-quality library service that meets the needs of the local community.'

As well as the considerable budget savings, creating a new independent organisation would also mean that communities have a greater say in how their local library is run. This could involve moving their library to an alternative community location to enable it to be open for longer and reduce the building's running costs, using volunteers to extend core library opening hours, using under-utilised space in the library, or using the library out of core opening hours to generate additional income and increase community use of the building or incorporating other services or facilities into the existing library in order to reduce the overall running costs. The independent organisation would also have greater flexibility and more control over running costs for the service and could access new funding sources unavailable to the Council. Libraries would also have a more concentrated focus and greater opportunities to engage more directly with customers, communities and partners.

The detail behind the not-for-profit, community-owned organisation will be worked on in the coming months. But public-sector workers' union Unison warned that job posts and libraries could still close.

Andy Bowman, from the union, said: 'The authority could cut back the amount of money it pays for the "mutual" library service, forcing it to cut back on the number of libraries and staff.

'It's abdicating its responsibility to this new body and distancing itself from the bottom-line decisions as to who has jobs and what libraries stay.'

Boost for Neighbourhood Planning

A £22m programme aims to support communities looking to set up neighbourhood plans.

Neighbourhood plans allow people to decide the future development of their area, including where new homes and businesses should be built.

Nearly 1,400 areas representing 6 million people across England are already using their neighbourhood planning powers, with others looking to follow suit.

At the end of February neighbourhood planning groups became able to apply for grant funding to pay for community engagement events, leaflet printing and for specialist planning expertise.

From April, community groups will receive technical assistance and expert advice to support new neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders.

The support programme runs to 2018.

Neighbourhood plans that can be used in determining planning applications can be voted into force in a referendum.

The government has also launched a new online toolkit to help communities navigate the neighbourhood planning process as effectively as possible.

Grants for community groups wanting to gain permission for new community buildings or community-led housing are have also opened.

Locality, a national network of community-led organisations, is delivering the government's neighbourhood planning support programme and will be assessing applications.

For further information on grants, visit www.mycommunity.org.uk.



PLANNING AID ENGLAND

Need assistance or advice on planning issues that are a worry to you? Is there a planning notice on the nearest telegraph pole to your property? A notice that a planning application has been submitted to demolish the house next door and construct a new property, or a proposed two storey extension at the rear?

Planning Aid England operates a free web resource called **Planning Aid Direct** (PAD) which offers answers to questions people often ask about planning; explanations of how the planning system works and signposting on where to go next. The website is proving to be a popular resource with over 1600 hits a month. Planning Aid England also operates an advice service and offers 15 minutes of free, professional, general planning advice over the telephone (0330 123 9244) or via email (advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk). Queries are received on all aspects of the planning system including the planning application process, enforcement, appeals, plan making and permitted development rights.

In the South West including Devon, Planning Aid England volunteers have assisted on a range of cases including assisting an elderly client understand proposals for an urban extension on land opposite her property and a vulnerable family apply for a certificate of lawful development for their annex.

Planning Aid England is expanding the services and support they can offer with a focus on community engagement and outreach. Over recent months they have helped a residents group understand and engage in

the planning system and assisted at a Local Plan consultation event.

Planning Aid England's focus remains on assisting individuals and communities who cannot afford planning consultants and those who do not traditionally engage in the Planning system.

Further information can be accessed from their website <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/>.

Graham Rogers, Housing and Planning Group,



**Free, independent
and professional
planning advice**



Readers Contributions—Hope Springs Eternal

As I plummet towards my 90th birthday on 14 July (Bastille Day) my mind as always at this time of year will home in on the heady days of the Enlightenment, with the associated hope that it brought for a more just and egalitarian society.

Keeping alive the hope that humankind will one day achieve a modus operandi conducive to the needs of a civilised and compassionate regime is disappointingly difficult. Ordinary people will remember the hope that was engendered in the 1930s by luminaries such as H.G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Hewlett Johnson (the 'Red' Dean of Canterbury) and many intellectuals regarding the USSR. Their theme was that they had 'seen the future, and it works!'

Subsequently the heroics of the Red Army and the peoples of the USSR in the Second World War seemed to endorse the view that this was not only a society with an indomita-

ble morale but one that befitted the requirements – politically, socially and economically – of modern times. Learning the truth about the Stalinist regime was a shock and a disappointment to millions of people across the world. There is still a long way to go before we reach the metaphorical 'promised land of milk and honey', but – as we used to sing with great fervour the words of William Blake's *Jerusalem* – we 'will not cease from mental fight'. Devon Senior Voice, by championing the cause of social justice for older people, can secure its place on the road to the new Jerusalem that will not fade away. Such are the musings of a near-nonagenarian. Have I any fellow-travellers?

Bill Jordan, President, Exmouth

MODERN SLAVERY: Part of the problem or part of the solution?



Anti Slavery International activist Tony Simpson – a member of Honiton Senior Voice - told a conference on Modern Slavery in the Eden project that it was essential that the West Country came to grips with its own history of slavery and involve community groups. The Conference was hosted by Devon and Cornwall Police - Chief Constable Shaun Sawyer is the lead for Britain's 43 Police Forces - and Cornwall County Council. It brought together delegates from over a hundred bodies to discuss the new Modern Slavery Bill, currently before the House of Lords. 'When tackling modern slavery it is important to understand our own history and what we can learn from it,' said Tony Simpson. 'After all, the British slave trade started in Devon almost 500 years ago; some of the largest compensations payments on Abolition in 1833 were made to Devon notables like the Rolle family of Bickton and even Bishop Philpotts of Exeter who were plantation slave owners. From my contact with dozens of groups in Devon I still find a great deal of ignorance about this and think it is vital that we involve young people in addressing modern slavery. We first have to acknowledge our role then realise it is a product of old attitudes in a new world; Young people are still as affected as any group by aspects of slavery, forced labour and human trafficking, especially girls and young women. Trade unions are weak in the west country. Many young people experience low wages and zero hours contracts but some also experience exploitation and slavery – such as domestic servitude, where no wages are actually paid. Slavery was never abolished. It never went away. It is still with us.'

Mr Simpson met and talked with the first **UK Independent Anti Slavery Commissioner - Kevin Hyland** - who will lead efforts to identify victims and ensure enforcement. 'Mr Hyland said he is very concerned that not enough is being done to address modern slavery. He expects a much greater effort in reporting and enforcement and in care and protection of modern slavery victims. He talked of the importance of partnerships and said no one approach

would work. I urged him and the Chief Constable to hold a similar conference in Devon. Our ASI group at Exeter is very keen on this.' Also present was **Paul Broadbent, the Chief Executive of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority.** He described how modern slavery and trafficking was still present in some aspects of agriculture, horticulture and other industries where unlicensed gangmasters operated. While Albania and Romania were countries of origin we should remember cases of modern slavery in Bedfordshire and Gwent involving UK citizens. Also debt bondage, where people paid money to get work, forced them into slavery because they were always paying the debt. 'Workers should never pay for a job,' said Mr Broadbent. Do remember this when you next see workers picking early fruit and vegetables, young men working in car washes or housemaids and young women who never seem to leave their place of work. Are they victims of modern slavery?

Tony Simpson told *Everyone's Tomorrow*: 'This was a really useful conference on ways to tackle modern slavery which involved Cornwall Council. Historically we know about slavery in Devon; I hope Devon County Council will sponsor a similar conference in accordance with a resolution in 2007 which they passed. I have also asked the Chief Constable and Commissioner to hold a similar conference here. Modern slavery will not be defeated by lip service but by a pro-active partnership by all the key bodies including police, councils, businesses and community organisations and schools. I think **Devon Senior Voice** and its branches could play an important role in helping to defeat modern slavery.'

Further details: Tony Simpson Tel 01404 548228 email: h.simpson1941@btinternet.com

Buzz Bombs and Rockets

In a recently published engineering journal I read of the important part played by eminent scientists in defence of this country against attacks by buzz bombs (V-1s or flying bombs or doodlebugs) and rockets (V-2s) during World War 2, and this set me reliving the times of my youth in South East London.

I think it true to say that even after the prolonged day-and-night air raids by aircraft morale was still high, but the buzz bombs and rockets that followed from June 1944 and September 1944 respectively proved to be a real test of endurance on the part of the civilian population.

In the case of the V-2s, if my memory serves me

correctly, a huge explosion on landing was followed by a whine given off by the missile travelling at supersonic speed en route to its target.

The buzz bomb had a distinctive pop-pop engine sound, which when it stopped meant we could expect a ton of high explosive to be detonated on hitting the ground shortly afterwards. Early in these attacks daring fighter pilots would fly their aircraft alongside the buzz bomb, and by using their aircraft's wings as levers would attempt to flip the V-1 towards the earth.

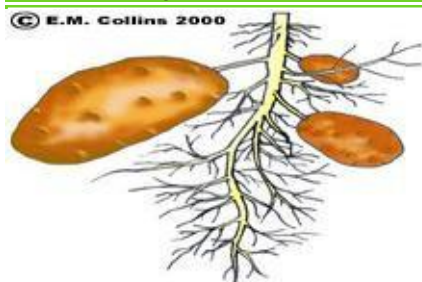
This practice was wisely discontinued when the Germans put explosive charges on the wing tips of the V-1s!

Bill Jordan, President, Exmouth



'Plant yer taters on Good Friday my boy'

© E.M. Collins 2000



"Plant yer taters on Good Friday my boy" was advice that my great grandfather issued to one and all as spring approached, but then as an aside

added, "but not the one that the Parson says it is". James William was at odds with the church about Easter, reckoning that someone cannot have a birthday on the same date but the anniversary of their death be on a different one each year. His "Good Friday" was always the third full weekend in March, something that has stuck with me for over 65 years, mine went in on March 20th, I plant Swift these days which matures in 60 days, so I shall be digging new potatoes on or about the 20th May.

Most Farmers of James William's era worked with the weather and folk law guiding their year. In December he would be awaiting the Seedsman's almanac which he would read from cover to cover, most years he would sigh contentedly, but occasionally his brow would furrow and a particular month would be circled. "A Saturday's moon and a Sunday's full is no good to God nor man nor never will", (it rhymes in a broad Black Country accent). What he had found was a new moon

on a Saturday with the following full moon on a Sunday, he would never plan to do anything in this fortnight.

Weather forecasting only came into its own after the Second World War, so most of the decisions were made by observing, listening to and smelling the signs. Although farming around Bewdley some 25 miles from Birmingham, if you could smell Cadbury's it was going to rain; an early mist over the Severn meant a fine day as did hearing the first train leaving Highley, (10 miles away).

As Easter approached the first cuckoo would give an indication of the summer to come. "When the cuckoo sings on an empty bough, keep your hay and sell your cow"; there is a similar saying in France which roughly translated is "when the cuckoo arrives in its winter plumage; plenty of wheat but little hay." It was time for dairy and stock farmers to decide whether to sell or keep any of last year's hay.

From "Blackthorn Winter", the direction that a horse's backside faces, the thickness of onion skins, they all helped to plan the days, months and even years, it will be a pity to see this folk law disappear with our generation.

Ken Crawford, Okehampton

Rehabilitation

After spending several weeks at the RD&E (Wonford) with a broken ankle among other things, I was sent to the Dawlish Community Hospital for a Rehabilitation Course to be completed at home. I was told that, when I returned home, meals would be provided, I would be put to bed at night and given urine bottles as well as a commode and that I would only be able to move short distances but always using a frame and only under supervision. When I asked what role my wife would play I was told that wives did not come into it, and that they were irrelevant to the rehabilitation programme.

Now I am sure that this programme is excellent for frail and very disabled persons who live on their own, but it did not seem at all relevant to me.

To start with, in Dawlish Hospital I was allowed to go any-

where unsupervised (using a frame) and before my accident I walked normally without any aids. I live in a bungalow with two easily accessible loos, and would have no difficulty going anywhere on my own.

To make matters worse my wife said she felt her exclusion would be an unwanted and unnecessary intrusion into our lives and that she was quite capable of providing meals and giving me any assistance that I might need.

As a result, once they had transferred me from the hospital to my bungalow *I used my legal right to tell all who were sent to "help me" that their services were not required*, and with my wife's help, I have managed very well. The message to those providing Rehabilitation is that **ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL!**

Peter Spackman, Dawlish

Health of the Elderly

It is natural I suppose in one's 90th year to reflect on the pros and cons of your life especially with respect to the worthwhileness of your involvement with voluntary organisations. In my case I have spent a great deal of time on health service committees and recently finished a long stint on the Budleigh Salterton Medical Centre Patient Group Committee. This group naturally focuses on the

availability of services for older people given the high percentage of them in the community. It would be interesting to know from other members their involvement in Patient Groups or akin organisations.

Bill Jordan, President, Exmouth



Fifty Shades of Grey has nothing to do with seniors hair colour but is the fastest selling paperback of all time (100million copies in 52 languages) which means you can get it from most charity shops. British writer

Erika Mitchell James - who at 52, is old enough to have joined the former Senior Council of Devon - only started writing five years ago and has already made a cool \$100m! -plus receipts from the current steamy film. Thus proving it is never too late to write about sex. My mum, bless her, told me sex was never talked about in the 'good old days'. She thought it very embarrassing and was glad when it was all finished with. Even today the **National Sex Survey** published in the **Lancet** only goes as far 74 years age. Do they think we're all past it? Far from it, it seems. A more recent survey of 7,000 older people reported that 60% of men and 34% of women between 70-80 years of age claim to 'regularly enjoy sex'. And even for people over 80 the figures are 31% men and 14% of women. Not quite sure why these figures don't add up but as Tommy Trinder would say 'Wow! - you lucky people'. It seems today's older generations are much more inclined to talk about the 'S' word; **Florence Hederson**, age 80 told the **Guardian** about her hot relationship with 'a friend with benefits'.

My gran and mum would have thought this referred to someone with a generous wallet. Nor does 'getting it' only apply to older partners of a similar age and sex. It seems toy boys and girls, L and G's are all OK with our generation. Well I suppose it was always around but earlier generations just kept quiet about it. Even my one time pash'- actress **Jane Fonda**, now age 77 - said 'sex is important to me.' I suppose it's also important for Jane's celebrity status; and not bad for the image of seniors either. It beats ageist Wonga adverts and signs showing bent old folk with sticks. Though I do wonder about older people who are lonely, suffer disabilities or are in care. Does anyone make love with them?

However, sexy surveys may not be all they claim. **Simon Kelner. i (Independent)** points out that while interviewees under-estimate what they drink and smoke, they often boast about the amount of sex they enjoy, especially - surprise, surprise - the guys. One older gent used to ask his daughter to buy Viagra for him; she (like him) was so embarrassed she gave him milk of magnesia tablets, which had the same result. No indigestion either. One happy result of the senior sex survey is that younger folk are hopping mad and envious of their older and randier peers. I suspect they're not the only ones. Another spin off is the best selling '**50 Sheds of Grey**' - what does go on in sheds? - which is available in all good DIY shops... Perhaps we could invite E. L. James to speak to our next Assembly though I doubt we shall find a hall big enough!

Tony Simpson, Honiton

Disability Aids Dumped



A Recycling tip at Sidmouth, East Devon....

The picture shows at least 7 commodes and 3 wheelchairs, along with a selection of shower and bath aid aids and several walkers. They all seemed in good condition and were probably worth many £hundreds . How long they would last in the open air would depend on the weather; a week of cold wet weather would do no favours for these expensive

disability aids.

A label gave details for where this equipment should be returned. Clearly this had not happened. None of these essential disability aids seem to have been returned for use within health and social care services. They had ended up being binned; sent to the recycling centre. We must hope they find an appropriate home. But why not the NHS?

*Bob Williams,
Honiton*



Fun/Useful Websites

Devon Senior Voice Diary Dates



Websites for 50s+

www.healthwatchdevon.org

www.life-over-50.com

www.silversurfers.net

www.saga.co.uk

www.moneysavingexpert.com

www.tasstavistock.org.uk

www.ageuk.org.uk

www.u3a.org.uk

Devon Community Directory :

www.directory.devon.gov.uk

The Devonshire Association (notably Folklore & Dialect) - www.devonassoc.org.uk

The Association of Retired Professional and Business Personnel www.ukprobus.org

Care Direct www.devon.gov.uk/caredirect.html

Age Concern Exmouth

www.ageconcernexmouth.co.uk

Don't forget to have a look at our website at home or in the library

www.devonseniorvoice.org

Board Meetings 2015
every 3rd Friday of the month at
Devon Communities Together
Offices, Marsh Barton

Assembly Meeting
Isca Centre
Exeter at 10am Date: 16th June 2015
'What I do Matters'

Health and Social Care Meeting
May 21st July 30th Tuesday 6th October all at 10.15am
(Venue—as Board Meetings above)

Transport Group Meeting 4th June and
7th October 2015
at 1.30 pm at Exeter CVS, Wat Tyler House

Branch Chairmen's Meeting
8th May, 9th July, 24th September, 4th December at 10.15
(Venue Devon Communities Together as above)

AGM, Isca Centre on 11th November at 10.30am

And finally - Use it or lose it!



A) All digits between 1-9 are used once in this grid. Can you work out where so that the sums work? (BODMAS does not apply).

9	x		-		14
÷		x		+	
	+		+		12
+		-		x	
	+		-	6	6
10		11		30	

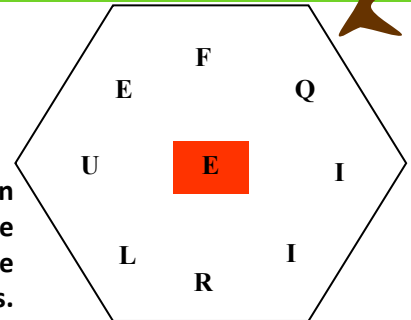
WIND

FALL



B)

Using the letters in the hexagon only once make as many 4 or more letter words always using the central letter, within 10 minutes. See if you can find the 9-letter anagram.



The Last Laugh ...



(A) (From top left to right) 2, 4, 3, 8, 1, 7, 5, (B) (Score more than 35—Excellent!) five, feel, fire, life lie, life, leet, ree, lure, reel, rife, rule, lifer, fire, fee, fuel, refuel, relief, ferule, free, ferule, rife, queer, quite, ireful, C) Wine, mine, mile, mill, mall