



“Supporting the older Community in Stevenage and surrounding areas”

Issue 41

April 2019

Welcome from the Trustees



Welcome to our second edition of 2019 and looking forward to a warmer season. We have recently completed our third Strength and Balance Course and it has been a huge success, such a sound idea to try to prevent falls! Back in December we had a wonderful afternoon at the Holiday Inn Stevenage starting off the Christmas celebrations. At our lunch we gave out gift bags generously donated from the SMALL Acts of Kindness which we handed out to our members. Also, a big thank you to

Tesco, Waitrose, Chauncy Charity and the Stevenage Community Trust for helping support our most vulnerable throughout the year.

Earlier in the year we attended the very moving Holocaust Memorial Event to honour survivors of genocides. A reminder to us all to learn lessons from the past to create a safer, better future. We have also attended numerous events throughout the town to help to shape and support the services offered to our members.

The highlight of the year once again was our St Patricks Day Lunch. With nearly 200 guests helping to celebrate this special day, it was definitely a day to remember! We were proud to present the Mayor of Stevenage with Shamrock to symbolise the importance of this day to both the Irish community and the role it has in the growth and prosperity of the town.

A gentle reminder, if anyone hasn't yet renewed their membership for 2019, please get in touch. We rely on the membership fees as this helps us subsidise events, also being a member of INS entitles you to discounts on trips and activities and access some of the other support services we provide.



Beware of Scams!

It seems to be that time of the year when every other phone call is telling you that you have had an accident, and the post seems to be full of offers to help claim back PPI or that you have won an amazing holiday or car!! These unscrupulous scammers target everyone regardless of age or income and can cost people lots of money and a great deal of distress. Here are some ideas to help stop you becoming a victim;

if it looks too good to be true—it probably is; ALWAYS get independent advice if an offer involves significant money, time or commitment; do not agree to offers or deals straight away; tell the person that you are not interested or that you want to get some independent advice before making a decision and never send money or give credit card or online account details to anyone you do not know and trust.

We suggest you sign up to the Telephone Preference Service, this might not stop all scam calls as they operate outside the legal guidelines, but it will stop cold-callers. This means any suspicious or unexpected calls you do receive are almost certainly from people you don't want to deal with. We would also suggest you consider getting Caller ID on your phone, this means you only accept calls from people you know and will help eliminate nuisance calls as they will take your number of their contact list and will stop bothering you.



Age Concern Stevenage

Age Concern is small independent local charity supporting the older generation of Stevenage and its surrounding villages. They are based in Stevenage Town Centre at the moment and can be found on the Ground Floor of Swingate House. Every Monday morning at 10am there is a bubbly coffee morning now to be found at the Council Offices, Stevenage Town Centre. Recently,

they have added a new Coffee afternoon at The Oval Community Centre from 1pm for those who prefer to pop out later in the day. In addition, to the coffee and chats, you can now also find them on a Monday and Tuesday morning in Westgate shopping centre for information, NHS Hearing Aid batteries and the hiring of mobility scooters. They also offer free advice surgeries; 1:1 Appointments including benefits advice from Age UK Herts on the first Wednesday of the month. On the third Wednesday of the month there is advice from a Local Solicitor. They also offer a Foot Health Clinic with a local Foot Healthcare practitioner which is by Appointment on a Tuesday and a Friday with a fee of £25.00 of which £5.00 is donated to Age Concern. They have a supply of Mobility Scooters and Wheelchairs for local hire and also for holiday hires. They stock a supply of NHS Hearing Aid batteries rather than struggling to get to the hospital. For further information online www.ageconcernstevenage.co.uk or on Facebook @AgeConcernStevenage, Address:- Ground Floor, Swingate House, Stevenage, SG1 1AF. tel 01438 314164.



A celebration of four years of the Friendship Group

The Friendship Group are celebrating their fourth year. This is a smallish group run by Margaret Rice and Peggy Lyons, our Vice Chair. Over the years the INS Friendship Group have bonded to become great friends. They all help and support to another which is so important to fend off horrible illnesses like depression and loneliness and the feeling of isolation.

It is important that we keep our members up to date with the support that is available, and we do this by having speakers from local agencies come to the group to tell them how they can help. We recently had an informative visit from Healthwatch, who are an independent national champion for people who use health and social care services. They help to make sure that those running services, and the government, put people at the heart of care. Our members were able to give Healthwatch real examples of when the NHS had provided fantastic service and when it had failed, Healthwatch then use this feedback to help improve services across the county.



In January, the Friendship Group had a lovely afternoon out to watch the Panto, Snow White, at the Gordon Craig Theatre. In February, the group had a wonderful afternoon at Bedwell Community Centre having a delicious Afternoon Tea. This group at the moment is full, however please get in touch if you would like to register and we can put your name on our waiting list.

Care in the Community

Our Care in the Community volunteer team tirelessly support our most vulnerable members of the community. This amazing network of volunteers has been running for just over a decade and just goes from strength to strength. It is so effective and in principal it is really like the community pulling together and supporting one another through the tough times. Without the support from the CIC team a lot of our vulnerable ladies and gentlemen could feel lonely or isolated and even depressed. The volunteers make numerous phone calls and are always out and about visiting the older members in the Community, even in hospital or care homes.

The feedback from our vulnerable members is that they love seeing someone from the INS team. Luke Donovan says that "I visit our members in hospital and care homes every week and I know how much they get from the visits. Even if we just stay for a chat, its company for them. They like talking about the old days, and I must admit I think I enjoy the visits as much as they do!" Our volunteers provide a huge amount of support and are keen to support any members that needs it. If you would like more information about the support they provide, please call us in the office.

IT Class

Concerned that many of us are missing out with the ever expanding digital world?. Please get in touch for a 1:1 IT appointment which is tailored to your own unique requirements. A little computer knowledge can make a big difference:- helping to keep in touch with friends and family, Skype, Face time, Email, Message to name a few. Learn new skills, looking up information, researching hobbies. Plus online; paying bills, shopping, purchasing holidays, train tickets and much, much more. Plus importantly, keeping your brain active which has such a positive affect in your life reducing the chance of feeling isolated and unhappy. This is a sound way of gaining confidence with modern technology in a fun, easy going environment. Please get in touch with Karen in the office if you would like to book a 1:1 appointment.



Social Events

We have many different activities and events on to ensure that there is something for everyone. We want our members to be as active as possible as we know it improves both our physical and mental wellbeing.

Every week we have our line dancing classes and exercises classes, these are both great fun and it's a good way to stay fit and to enjoy yourself at the same time! Ken Whybrow is our volunteer line dance leader and teaches a new dance every few months. It's a very easy going class, perfect for people that haven't danced before or aren't that experienced. Isabelle Hinman who runs our exercise classes is an OTAGO qualified instructor who designs all her classes around having fun - how many exercise classes use plastic chickens!



Every month we have Bingo, Film Club, Mens Club, a Tea Dance and an Afternoon Social - as you can see we are very busy! We also like to get out and about, In January, we went to the Luton Irish Forum for chicken, chips and a few games of Bingo. Even the snow didn't stop us! We also have our summer trips coming up. The first one will be in June, we haven't yet decided where we are going but it will be somewhere that appeals to everyone. In August we will have our traditional trip to Southend-on-Sea, which is always great fun and we are usually lucky with the

weather. Nothing tastes better than fish and chips by the sea!

We always like to think about different activities we could arrange or different classes we could start, so if you have any ideas just speak to Elaine or one of the Trustees and they will look into it. After all everything else we do has been suggested by members!



Trustee Profile - Vice-Chair Peggy Lyons

Peggy was born in Dungarvan, Co Waterford and came to England back in 1963. Peggy previously was a social worker and has used her extensive knowledge of the care system to help her navigate her voluntary roles. Peggy has been a member of the Stevenage Credit Union for many years and held the position of Chair for 18 years. She was also a volunteer for the Stevenage Furniture Re-Cycling Scheme and is still a Trustee for the Stevenage World Forum. Her passion remains with her Irish roots and is very proud to be INS's Vice Chair. Peggy has said "What an honour it is to be the Vice Chair of such a wonderful charity and being able to help the older ladies and gents of our community."



What Peggy loves the most is being in the thick of the community, giving support and care to our most vulnerable members sometimes over a cup of tea. Her duties as Vice Chair are very similar to the role as Chair, where you need a unique set of skills and characteristics. At times, the Vice Chair will need to stand in for the Chair and attend internal and external meetings. Peggy recently attended the Mayors Reception, plus various events at the Irish Embassy and other local meetings. Peggy's main involvement is organising and overseeing the INS social events for our elderly and vulnerable members and what a fabulous job she does!

1:1 IT Classes Helping you learn what you want at your own pace from basic IT to Facebook or Emailing. Cost is £3.00 per session and need to be booked in advance.

Friendship Group This is a group made up of more vulnerable members. Places are limited and there is a waiting list, so please contact us if you would like to attend.

Film Club What better way to spend an afternoon than watching a film with friends? All films played are requests from our members. We also keep a library of all films shown which can be borrowed free of charge. There is a small charge of £2.00 for tea, coffee and fresh homemade scones.

Men's Club A men's only morning to spending time with friends playing Poker and Dominos. We are also planning on arranging other occasional activities. Small fee of £2.00.

Tea Dance An afternoon of live entertainment including tea, coffee, homemade sandwiches, cakes and scones. Entry is £4.00 for members and £5.00 for non-members and tickets must be purchased pre-event.

Bingo Feeling lucky? Why not come to one of our Bingo afternoons — Entry is £1.00 and it is £1.50 for 3 books or £3.00 for 6 with free tea, coffee and biscuits. All profits are given out as prize money — we have been told how generous we are!

Line Dancing Once a week, one class suits all, each class is £2.00 and open to everyone.

Afternoon Social Everyone is welcome to our monthly socials and entry is £3.00 for members and £4.00 non-members. The afternoon includes a Raffle, Live Music and lots of fun. Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided.

Exercise Class Everyone is welcome. A gentle chair based exercise class once a week. £2.00 per person.

For Dates and times of all our events please turn to the next page.

Dates for your Diary

April

1st - 10.00am - 1.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
1st - 1.00pm - 2.00pm	Line Dancing	Bedwell Community Centre
TBC - 10.00am - 12.00pm	Friendship Group	The Sherma Batson Centre
3rd - 1.00pm - 2.30pm	Bingo	Bedwell Community Centre
5th - 10.00am - 12pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
5th - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre
8th - 10.00am - 1.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
8th - 1.00pm - 2.00pm	Line Dancing	Bedwell Community Centre
10th - 1.00pm - 3.00pm	Tea Dance	Bedwell Community Centre
12th - 10.00am - 12.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
12th - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre
15th - 10.00am - 1.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
15th - 1.00pm - 2.00pm	Line Dancing	Bedwell Community Centre
16th - 10.30am - 12.00pm	Men's Club	The Sherma Batson Centre
17th - 12.30pm - 3.00pm	Film Club	The Sherma Batson Centre
24th - 1.00pm - 3.00pm	Afternoon Social	Bedwell Community Centre
26th - 10.00am - 12.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
26th - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre
29th - 10.00am - 1.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
29th - 1.00pm - 2.00pm	Line Dancing	Bedwell Community Centre

May

1st - 1.00pm - 2.30pm	Bingo	Bedwell Community Centre
3rd - 10.00am - 12.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
3rd - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre
TBC - 10.00am - 12.00pm	Friendship Group	The Sherma Batson Centre
8th - 1.00pm - 3.00pm	Tea Dance	Bedwell Community Centre
10th - 10.00am - 12.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
10th - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre
13th - 10.00am - 1.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
13th - 1.00pm - 2.00pm	Line Dancing	Bedwell Community Centre
14th - 10.30am - 12.00pm	Men's Club	The Sherma Batson Centre
15th - 12.30pm - 3.00pm	Film Club	The Sherma Batson Centre
17th - 10.00am - 12.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
17th - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre
20th - 10.00am - 1.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
20th - 1.00pm - 2.00pm	Line Dancing	Bedwell Community Centre
22nd - 1.00pm - 3.00pm	Afternoon Social	Bedwell Community Centre
24th - 10.00am - 12.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre

Dates for your Diary

May cont:

24th - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre
31st - 10.00am - 12.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
31st - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre

June

3rd - 10.00am - 1.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
3rd - 1.00pm - 2.00pm	Line Dancing	Bedwell Community Centre
TBC - 10.00am - 12.00pm	Friendship Group	The Sherma Batson Centre
5th - 1.00pm - 2.30pm	Bingo	Bedwell Community Centre
7th - 10.00am - 12.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
7th - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre
10th - 10.00am - 1.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
10th - 1.00pm - 2.00pm	Line Dancing	Bedwell Community Centre
TBC	DAY TRIP	Bedwell/ Matalan
12th - 1.00pm - 3.00pm	Tea Dance	Bedwell Community Centre
14th - 10.00am - 12.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
14th - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre
17th - 10.00am - 1.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
17th - 1.00pm - 2.00pm	Line Dancing	Bedwell Community Centre
18th - 10.30am - 12.00pm	Men's Club	The Sherma Batson Centre
19th - 12.30pm - 3.00pm	Film Club	The Sherma Batson Centre
21st - 10.00am - 12.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
21st - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre
24th - 10.00am - 1.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
24th - 1.00pm - 2.00pm	Line Dancing	Bedwell Community Centre
28th - 10.00am - 12.00pm	IT Class	The Sherma Batson Centre
28th - 1.30pm - 2.30pm	So Healthy	Bedwell Community Centre

Wednesday Christmas Club

Our WCC has been a huge success. It is encouraging consistent saving and people are quickly seeing how easy it is to save regular amounts. Our WCC membership has increased this year by 42% this year and our savers have set up direct debits and are making regular deposits. Over £2 billion is spend over the Christmas period in the UK and saving with our scheme is helping our members budget more effectively for Christmas and remain debt-free in January.



Members Page

Every edition we like to feature the life stories of some of our members. We sometimes forget that people have had a rich and interesting life before they even became members. If you would like to be featured please do contact us.

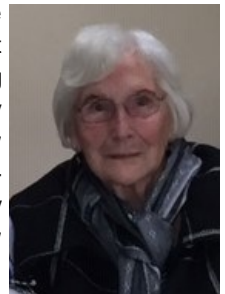
Pat Wadsworth

Pat was born in Hammersmith and lived most of her childhood years in Shepherds Bush and Chiswick. Briefly the family went up to Scotland to spend time with Pats grandparents. Then they returned to London and then to Walton-on-the-Naze where Pats Mum and Dad took on a guest house. Pats teenage years school years were at Clacton County High, where she juggled school life and helping her parents in the guest house, especially when her mum became ill. She met her soul mate Paddy at a Valentines Dance whilst he was staying with friends after he had been demobbed from the Army. Pat had a fun, party life style with Paddy and friends in the Essex seaside town. They got married and went to Ireland and started a family. Times were hard back then and in Ireland there was a lack of jobs. Paddy came to England and found a job with ICI with the promise of a house! Pat came over with her newborn baby son and they stayed in lodgings until 18 months later they were given a new council houses in Bedwell. They then moved to a larger house in Vinters Avenue on the carnival day in 1970. They had a busy, happy family life whilst Pat juggled being a working mum. She worked at BAE for over 17 years. In 1997, Pat and Paddy moved to Broadwater to a lovely bungalow, however Paddy sadly passed away in 2009. Pat has four children, six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Pat has many friends and loves spending time with them and her family.



Ann Murray

Ann was born in Co. Louth, Ireland and was one of 5 children and she worked in Ireland looking after children until the age of 23. Around that time her friend said she was going to England and Ann said "I'm coming with you!" A couple of weeks later, she told her mother on the Sunday night, went to work on the Monday and left on the Tuesday. Their new employer asked the girls to pick up their 10 shillings and tickets in Dublin prior to leaving Ireland. they didn't need to pay this back if they worked for more than 6 months in catering in a hotel in London. A few months later Ann met her future husband Tim in Kilburn, London. Soon after meeting Tim he was called up for National Service for 3 years.



During that time they got married. They went on to have 4 children, 2 boys and 2 girls. Times were hard but they were happy in their flat in Kilburn. Tim sadly passed away at a very young age and Ann moved with the children to be near family in Borehamwood. Later she moved to Knebworth and then to Stevenage to be near grandchildren. In Stevenage she met her 2nd husband, Jim and they had 15 happy years together. Ann and Jim both loved attending the INS socials but in 2012, Jim sadly passed away. Ann has 4 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Ann wanted to say how grateful she was for all the support she received from the INS Friendship Group and the INS in general plus support from Crossroads Care.

Are you getting everything you are entitled to?

We are very fortunate to have an experienced volunteer who may be able to help make your life a bit easier and look into the range of benefits you may be entitled to, or even help to reduce your bills. Our volunteer could help to complete the complex forms, including Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment. There are various other benefits available to older people:- from the Winter Fuel Payments, to free bus passes when you reach the female State Pension age whether you are male or female. If you're aged 60 or over, you're entitled to free prescriptions, free eye tests. If you're aged 75 or over or your household includes someone over 75, you're entitled to a free TV licence.

Our volunteer has also helped members get cheaper tariffs with their existing utility providers, reduced home insurance costs and even helped them get better TV packages for less money! Please contact us in the office for a 1:1 appointment.



Tom Burnside's story – A celebration of life with my Annie!

Tom went to Cowdenheath High School. Around the age of thirteen, Tom first noticed Annie! It was snowing heavily and Tom and his friends decided to take on the girls in the snow. The ammunition was snowballs which they pelted at one another. During the affray Tom noticed one girl standing on her own. She was neatly dressed in an Anderson tartan kilt and warm jacket. Tom thought there and then "That is the girl for me!" Tom and Annie stayed friends whilst at school and then for a while they went their separate ways. Tom learnt that Annie had been ill with appendicitis and then he wrote to ask how she was. Annie's dad was not too impressed with them having a relationship as they had only just left school and were young. They drifted apart and Tom did four years in the Army but he never forgot Annie.

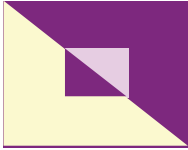


When he got back to Scotland he managed to get his old job back in the Co-op, Lochgelly. Soon after, Tom was waiting for his bus and just so happened to notice Annie who was sitting on one of the buses. He wrote to her to ask to see her again and the rest as they say is history! Tom proposed to her and they got married on the 8th August 1953 which Tom's boss was very pleased about and said "now I can sort out staff holidays!" They had many happy years together surrounded by friends and family in Lochgelly, Scotland. In fact they had 65 happy years of marriage.

The above picture is from their 65th anniversary celebrations. Due to a career change for Tom they moved to Stevenage and carried on with their good life. In their retirement years they spend many a happy time with the INS. Sadly, Annie suffered a severe stroke and on the 14th November 2018 Annie passed away leaving Tom with a son, daughter and three grandsons. Her legacy however, lives on!

Sponsors

We work very hard to support our members and the local community and we request support wherever we can to subsidise our events and all our activities. The businesses advertised here, whilst not personally endorsed by INS, have been shown their support by sponsoring this newsletter, which has enabled us to provide even more information about our activities to our members and the local community. The Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank these businesses for their continued support.



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Support for Newsletter

INS works hard to support older people within our local community and the newsletter is an important way to keep our members up to date with what we are doing. This newsletter is produced using funds provided by the local businesses and sponsors, and we currently need more. If you would like to advertise in our newsletter please do contact us.

Working in Partnership With

We have been very fortunate to receive tremendous support from local and national organisations and funders. The support has been both financial and practical and the Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank those organisations that have supported us.



If you would like to speak to us about anything you have read in the newsletter or about the support we provide please do not hesitate to contact us either by post, telephone or email at:-

Sherma Batson Centre, 10-12 Exchange Road, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 1PZ.

info@irishnetworkstevenage.org.uk
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