

Forum 50+ Newsletter – April/May 2022

Message from the Chairperson, Dave Wright

Spring is here, the snowdrops and daffodils are bringing some brightness to our lives. We see flowers coming to life in our gardens, window boxes and neighbours' front gardens. Those of us with grandchildren are planning Easter events and thinking about the meaning of this special time of year. COVID is still with us however life is seemingly back to some sort of normality and we hope you are now managing to get out,

Writing this article in March, Russia is waging war on Ukraine and I don't know what the situation will be by the time this magazine is published? Let's hope leaders see sense and retreat to their own territories, but I doubt it.

2022 is already a quarter of the way through – where does the time go? The Queen's Platinum Jubilee events are fast approaching, and we hope that you have some plans to celebrate this special time for our monarch who has served since 6 February 1952. See pages 4 & 5 for details of our events.

I am old enough to remember the Queen coming back from Kenya on her father's (King George VI) death. For the 1953 Coronation, we had a TV as big as a wardrobe and I remember neighbours coming round to watch the great event. At school we were given a cup and saucer, mug, and plate with a picture of the Queen and the date, I still have them somewhere. Those of you who were born before 1950, what are your memories of the day? Drop us a line and we will try and put some of your stories in the Forum later in the year.

We hope to see you soon but until then, take care and please keep safe.

Open Forum Meeting Monday 25th April 2022

The Wakes, Oakengates, TF2 6EP

1pm - 2.30pm, drop in and meet us, enjoy a chat, hot drink and cake.

Find out about Forum 50+ services, activities, computer support, volunteering.

Presentation: 2.30pm

Don't Waste Time & Energy Citizens Advice Telford

Whether or not to switch supplier.

- What tariff you should be on in 2022.
- Warm Home Discount.
- Priority Services Register.
- ECO Scheme and Green Homes Grants.
- Smart Meters.

Plus an opportunity for questions

Open to members and non-members. Free to attend.

Please book your place for the presentation:

Tel 07932 828333/07552 975676,

email: enquiries@forum50plus.org.uk

or book online at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/303481520397>

For free impartial advice on your energy bills, call 01952 567193 or 0808 278 7988 or email: case@telfordcab.co.uk

Join us at our Platinum Jubilee Celebration!

Sandwiches and cakes, tea & coffee, followed by live music, dancing and a quiz.

Thursday 16th June, 1.15 - 3.30pm

Hadley Community Centre, 30 High Street, Hadley, Telford, TF1 5NL

Tickets £6, on sale now.

How to purchase tickets:

Online using debit/credit card: www.eventbrite.com/e/303612552317

By phone: (using card or paying by online banking/post after call)

Tel: 07932 828333

By post, (address on page 2), please state:

Name & Address.

The number of tickets you require.

Whether you have any dietary requirements or allergies.

Please enclose a cheque for the correct amount made payable to Forum 50+.

In person at our event on 25th April,(by cheque or cash).

Feeling a bit lonely and isolated? Would you like some company?

Forum 50+ Social Groups

Join us at our one of our regular friendship groups for hot drink, lots of chat and a chance to make new friends.

Call us to find out where and when our groups meet. If we know you're coming, we can look out for you! Tel 07552 975676/07932 828333.

Other new local groups:

Café Conversations

A new group called 'Cafe Conversations' featuring cooking, wellbeing, activities and much more has started at the Park Lane Centre, Woodside. Fridays 3pm - 5pm, all ages welcome. Contact: 01952 683700.

Wellbeing Café

A new drop in afternoon of chat and other activities has launched at the Outpost Café at the Wakes, Oakengates, on Fridays 2pm - 4pm. All ages welcome, just turn up.

There will be health advice, information about services, occasional speakers, walks, quizzes, board games etc.

Dawley Bank Baptist Church

Coming soon, activities taking place on Mondays and Fridays, including exercise, activities, coffee and chat, lunch club. Contact: 07785 534507.

St Leonard's Church, Malinslee

Wednesday activities starting 4th May. Seated exercise class at 10am, (see page 13). From 11am - 1pm, there'll be hot drinks and chat, and arts and crafts. Contact: 07511 870070.

Anyone interested in a Book Club?

One of our members has expressed an interest in getting a book club started, where people meet to choose and talk about a specific book.

If you're interested in this, please get in touch. Tel 07552 975676/07932 828333.
Email: enquiries@forum50plus.org.uk

Oakengates Senior Social@The Wakes Every Thursday @ 1.30pm

28th April Live Music with jacket potato (TADLOP)
5th May Talk with soup & fruit (Alison's Bee Class)
12th May Live Music with pork baps (Telfordaires)

Platinum Jubilee events:

19th May Film & Cake

To ensure there are enough places for everyone, please book just one of the following:

26th May Jubilee Afternoon Tea and live music £5.00
9th June Jubilee Afternoon Tea and live music £5.00

All include tea and coffee. Limited places, please book by:
visiting The Wakes, TF2 6EP or online at www.thewakes.org.uk
For enquiries call 01952 567500.

Platinum Jubilee Events

There'll be lots of events taking place this spring and summer to celebrate the Jubilee, but we don't have room to publicise them all.

Visit www.telford.gov.uk/info/20805/the_queen_s_platinum_jubilee
or give us call and we'll have a look for you.

You could also look out for local town and parish council news for what's going on near you.

We need volunteers!

Volunteer for Forum 50+

Help us to help others....by volunteering a little of your time.

Telephone befriending volunteers - to make a regular phone call to chat and help ease loneliness. At the current time we have people waiting to be matched with a caller so please help if you can.

Face to face befrienders - home visits or meeting up, helping people to get out.

Computer support volunteers - helping at a weekly drop in session or providing support through home visits.

Helping at a small friendship group - helping people feel welcome.

Full support and guidance will be given and any travel costs and other out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

Call Chris for a chat to find out more: 07932 828333

Environment & Transport Action Group Ken Buttress, Chair of ETAG

Looking firstly to buses, Arriva have been keeping us in touch with one or two issues – a bus fare increase this month, some relocation of services at Telford Bus Station and at Wellington Bus Station while repairs and improvements were taking place.

The biggest problem has been driver shortages leading to everyone employed by the company with a PCV licence being sent out to try to keep services running. The situation has improved somewhat but

may remain an issue from time to time. Drivers are also having problems keeping services to time in some areas with works going on all across Telford at present, never mind the recent flooding in the Ironbridge area.

The government has recently announced their grant to keep bus services operating post Covid, which runs until the end of October. Although bus passenger numbers are slowly returning to pre-Covid levels, along with the government's Bus Services Improvement Plan, reviews of routes and frequencies must be expected. So in the words of the old advertising slogan, remember to use them or risk losing them. Turning now to trains, one of our members keeps us up to date as new trains, both for Transport for Wales and West Midlands Railway, leave storage in the freight depot at Hortonwood, so hopefully we will see some about in service soon, and the problems being experienced recently in getting from Birmingham to Telford in the evenings being eased. Transport for Wales also announced recently that all their class 158 units have now been refurbished, so if you travel from Shrewsbury to Cardiff or Manchester you might be in luck.

Both train companies are experiencing problems with drivers being off with Covid, and they advise to check timetables carefully when planning to travel, particularly between Wolverhampton and Birmingham and also from Shrewsbury to Newtown and beyond, where there are bus replacement services running due to recent flooding. Emergency or amended timetables may well be in operation.

The DVLA has started a new advertising campaign to remind us all to tax our cars. Remember that although no one else can clamp your car, the DVLA certainly can!

On environmental issues the group has discussed fly tipping, problems with damage to road verges on Castlefields Way and electric vehicle charging point provision in new housing developments, along with the government's Treescape Funding Package for local authorities.

We continue to keep an eye on the council's legal notices and object on members behalf to any proposals for more speed humps in the roads. The Donnington area seems to be the next in line for the road humps treatment, along with the introduction of a 20mph speed limit covering almost the entire parish area.

If you have a problem relating to environment or transport issues in Telford that are seemingly intractable, do let us know and we will do our best to help.

Tea & Tech, Tablets and Smartphones.

For anyone who is interested in learning some basic technology skills, whilst learning and socialising with others. Tea and Tech sessions will cover different skills each session but, will also help to assist you with what you are interested in learning!

Please contact the Community Link Workers on 01952 916071 or email communitylinkworker@tandwcvcs.org.uk to register your interest.

STARTING WINTER 2022 ON FRIDAYS

Session 1: 22nd April

Session 2: 29th April

Session 3: 6th May

Session 4: 13th May

Session 5: 20th May

Session 6: 27th May

At the Independent Living Centre 3A Hazeldine House, Telford Town Centre, Telford, TF3 4JL

We look forward to seeing you there!

If you feel old, lonely and wary of the internet, do what I did – learn Zoom

By Esther Rantzen (Taken from an article in the Guardian.)

We oldies already know how to stay happy and healthy. So we don't need any young whippersnapper – or worse, elderly TV presenter – to tell us what to do. But I have learned an important lesson in the two years since Covid hit, and I thought maybe others could benefit from it too. It's about the internet.

My generation is very wary of the internet – a view I understand and, to an extent, share. Every day there are new warnings about the dangers of cyberspace: the scams and the swindlers targeting older people. Callers to the Silver Line helpline often say that trying to navigate this jungle with a mouse, a keyboard and a mystifying screen is a challenge that has defeated them.

That wouldn't be such a problem, except that so many things are now migrating online – and technology's triumphant march is leaving an awful lot of older people very isolated. Take shopping. My grandmother enjoyed pottering around the high street, exchanging gossip with shopkeepers who would greet her by name, ask after her family, and recognise and value her. Now, the human face has been replaced by a click on a screen.

Even before the pandemic, Age UK found that in England, 1.4 million older people often felt lonely. It's not easy to admit, because loneliness carries a stigma. The word we hear most often from callers to the Silver Line helpline is "burden".

One lady wrote to me that since she lost her husband of 54 years, she sometimes goes "for three days at a time without talking to anyone. I am an optimist by nature and sometimes I need that to get through another pointless day when I feel as if I am a waste of space." No wonder loneliness causes serious damage to mental and physical health.

I do not believe that there is a magic bullet to combat loneliness. But having seen how technology was cutting off older people, I learned to my surprise during lockdown that it could also offer a solution. When we were unable to meet face to face, it brought my family and friends into my home. We couldn't travel, or hug, but still every day we could laugh, chat and send each other pictures.

Work continued – I attended weekly meetings via FaceTime and Skype. It's convenient, easy, and I still do it. Even though I live deep in a forest, I still feel connected with the outside world, and the skills I learned during lockdown continue to prove their value to me day by day.

I still had to learn how to actually use Zoom and Skype, but once you invent memorable passwords (and learn how to reinvent them when, as inevitably happens, they become unmemorable) they become your best friends. The good news I have discovered from the last 18 months of Zooming is that you only have to look respectable down to the waist, so you can spend the day in comfy slippers.

It's up to us oldies to take the first step. If any of us feel excluded or confused by technology, we must swallow our pride and ask for help.

And it's worth it. A review found lots of evidence for "the positive effect of computer use on the psychological functioning and wellbeing of the older adults".

Yes, there are new dangers, but any adventure has its risks. I would remind any reluctant fellow oldies that the invention of the car meant learning to drive, memorising the Highway Code, and fastening our seatbelts in order to stay safe. The same applies to navigating the internet: it's a challenge at first, but it's worth it. Like the car, the internet enables us to explore the world, to join our friends and loved ones. And if at first the computer defeats us, it's a wonderful excuse to ring up our grandchildren and ask them for help.

Are you wary of technology - concerned about being targeted by scammers and hackers?

We can help you learn how to take steps to keep yourself safe online. We also offer help to explore new things you can do on your computer, tablet or mobile phone and we can help tackle problems too. Or perhaps you want to start from scratch, including getting guidance with choosing and setting up equipment.

Contact us for help at home by calling 07932 828333/07552 975676
Email: enquiries@forum50plus.org.uk

Or drop in at our free weekly sessions -

Hartshorne Court, Burton St, Dawley, TF4 2BY

Mondays, 10.30am - 12.30pm

The Anstice, 1 Anstice Square, Madeley, TF7 5BD

Tuesdays, 2pm - 4pm

Butter Cross Court, Stafford St, Newport, TF10 7UD

Wednesdays, 11am - 1pm

Tablet Loan Scheme

You could be eligible to loan a tablet for up to 3 months.

A tablet is a handheld electronic device which connects to the internet and allows you to browse websites, access emails, read e-books and much more.

Thanks to the #KindleKindess campaign, Telford & Wrekin CVS have a limited number of tablets that they can loan out to anyone who would like to be more digitally included.

If you've never used a tablet before... Don't worry! You will be provided with support, information and resources to help you get started!

For more information, please call
Telford and Wrekin CVS on 01952 916071
Or email: communitylinkworker@tandwcv.org.uk

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Offices also at Smithfield Road, Much Wenlock, TF13 6BG

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Loving my plants!

As many of you will know, I LOVE gardening! I find it both relaxing and therapeutic and write about its value all the time. However, in winter it's a bit tricky to 'get out there' as it's cold, damp and the ground is doing its thing and replenishing everything under the surface. With this in mind and coupled with the fact that my son has got heavily into plants, I have rekindled a passion of mine.....house plants!

I used to grow many in a former house however, on moving I gave a number away and just never got around to replenishing my original stock. This new found passion has given me so much pleasure and I'm now in a place where I really have to curb my spending on them. Not to mention the outer pots which can cost up to a fortune.

Apparently, during lockdown plant sales increased and people invested greatly in this seemingly, new passion. I have to say, there are worse things you could spend money on.

So, what is so great about growing plants? Well, if you are anything like me.....you'll be rescuing ones that have been neglected and are reduced in garden centres and supermarkets. I love doing this, if I see a plant that looks as though it's on its last legs, I can't help myself, I have to buy it! I also ask for a discount though, and almost every time I get it.

Caring and nurturing this plant back to life gives me such a buzz, of course, sometimes you do have to accept that you may lose a few. Although, I have to say I have lost very few.

The benefits in my opinion are as follows:

- You get a bargain plant.

- You get to share ‘the love’ on this plant.
- It may need re-potting (getting your hands in compost is a great way to destress).
- As it grows and develops, you’ll feel a real sense of achievement
- It also helps the air quality in the room.
- Friends and visitors will almost certainly notice it.

I can hear you say, I haven’t the time or the spare money. Well, it doesn’t have to be expensive as you can buy reduced plants or a high street supermarket can sometimes be a great source for plant sales. In fact, one even offers a range for £1 a pot! This is great as you really do see this tiny plant grow before your very eyes.....it will need re-potting in no time!

The outer pots don’t need to be expensive; I have picked up some amazing bargains in charity shops or car boot sales. Failing that, baskets and all sorts of containers (including candle holders) will double up as a zany outer pot. I have used tea and coffee containers before now.

So, why not give it a go? I promise you’ll be hooked in no time!

www.smart-lifecoach.co.uk dianne.srsmart@gmail.com
Tel: 07896 955 911

Exercise Classes - 3 new classes!

New class! Yoga for all abilities

Mon 10am - 11am

Leegomery Community Centre, Leegate TF1 6NA

Chair Yoga

Weds 10.00am - 11.00am

Dawley Town Hall,

TF4 3JR

Menoga - Yoga for Men

Thurs 9.15am - 10.15am

Hadley Community Centre TF1 5NL

For all the above, call Anne-Marie on 07734 107383, email: yogawithannemarie@gmail.com

Seated Exercise

Tues 1pm - 2pm,

The Wakes, Oakengates TF2 6EP

Call Sarah on 07821 739943.

New Classes! in partnership with T&W Council, St Leonard’s Church/ Dawley Baptist Church.

Exercise for All!

Starts 4th May

Weds 10am - 11am

St Leonard's Church, Malinslee TF4 2DS.
Call Rebecca on 07773 852493

New session coming!

Starts in May.

Fridays 10am - 11am

Dawley Bank Baptist Church, Park Rd, TF4 2BB

Call Jillian on 07785 534507

Could you be receiving Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance is a benefit for people over State Pension age who need help with personal care or supervision because of illness or disability. You can use it in any way you like to meet your needs and stay independent in your own home and the money doesn't have to be spent on a carer.

There are some other upsides:

- Claiming Attendance Allowance won't reduce any other income you receive.
- It's tax-free.
- If you're awarded Attendance Allowance, you may become entitled to Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction, or an increase in these benefits if you're already receiving them.
- Attendance Allowance isn't means-tested so it doesn't matter how much income and savings you have.

You can claim if you meet all the following criteria:

- You are over State Pension age (if you haven't reached it, you may be eligible for Personal Independence Payment instead).
- You could benefit from help with personal care, such as getting washed or dressed, or supervision to keep you safe during the day or night.
- You have any type of disability or illness, including sight or hearing impairments, or mental health issues such as dementia.
- You have needed help for at least 6 months. (If you're terminally ill you can make a claim straight away.)

How do I claim?

Get a claim form by calling the Attendance Allowance helpline on 0800 731 0122 (textphone: 0800 731 0317), or you can download a form from:

www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim

When you fill in the form be really clear about how your illness or disability affects your life and don't underestimate your needs.

If you need any help filling in the form, you can ask your local Age UK (01743 2331230) or Citizens Advice (01952 567193) who may be able to help.

Before you send it in, don't forget to attach any supporting information, such as GP letters, your care plan, or prescription lists. The Department for Work and Pensions may contact you for more information.

You will get a letter with the decision on whether or not you'll get Attendance Allowance, how much, and from what date. If you're not happy with the outcome, you can appeal.

Colour, Health and Wellbeing - Dr Jane Graham

Driving through North Wales this week I couldn't help but feel joyous when faced with the mass of daffodils bobbing around in the breeze. I have to say that although this winter has been fairly mild, it feels like it has gone on forever and the bursts of warmth and sunshine, the leaves coming through on the trees and the ever-romantic blossoms just starting to bud help me feel more energetic and positive.

How lovely it is to see colours becoming more vibrant. Not only in nature but lovely to see how some of us are starting to wear brighter colours now as the new season becomes more evident.

Colour is intrinsically linked with mood and can be used to help bring balance and harmony to how we are feeling. Throughout the ages colour has been used in healing. For instance, blues and purples tend to be calming and cooling. They are known to help relaxation. Reds, oranges and yellows are warm and bring a feeling of excitement, joy and energy. Green represents harmony, with white representing truth, brilliance and purity. Although you may generally have one or two favourite colours, you may find yourself drawn to a different colour altogether, and it is often suggested that we can be drawn to certain colours when we need to embrace the qualities they offer.

Light is of course hugely important for our mood and wellbeing too, as well as for our physical health. At home we should aim to have a good source of natural light in every room. We can also use paint and soft furnishings to create moods for each of our rooms and to get the most benefit from therapeutic use of colour. It is worth giving some thought to the size and purpose of each room, for instance, in a small room, single pale colours give a sense of light and space, where strong or dark colours can make a room feel small and for some people, quite claustrophobic.

Over the past few years, blacks and deep crimsons have become popular colours for bedrooms, with the idea of creating a warm, passionate ambience. Unfortunately, black can represent a withholding, a lack of inspiration and control. Red can over-stimulate and cause sleeplessness and insomnia. Colours such as indigo or dark teal may prove very restful in the bedroom and may help headache sufferers relax more.

We can subtly help change our mood and well-being by the use of colour in many ways. We can of course choose the colours in our home, clothes and jewellery, and even eat and drink colour vibrations. Think about the vibrancy and stimulation of carrots, red peppers, oranges and lemons, the calming, restoring balance of green salads, and the calming, immune building tones of purple in wonderful berry juices!

As we move into brighter longer days, I would like to share with you a meditation you can do with colour visualisation. The purpose of the meditation is to help you get in touch with your emotional state at the moment and this meditation can also help you to find inner answers to a question you may have.

Firstly, make yourself comfortable in a quiet, restful room, where you won't be disturbed for 15-20 minutes. You should aim to wear loose clothes and use cushions to allow your seat and back to be well supported.

Closing your eyes, take your mind to a beautiful garden. It may be one you have visited before where you have felt tranquil and happy, or one that you can make up using your imagination. What season is it? Now notice the sky – is the sky blue, and are there clouds? Is it sunny, or else rainy or overcast? Are

there birds in the sky? Can you hear them? Are there any other sounds? Do you notice any butterflies, or other insects such as bees?

Now picture yourself sitting down on the grass. You can feel the softness between your bare toes. Look around you. You are surrounded by every kind of flower and every colour of flower you can imagine. Your senses are full of the wonderful, vibrant colours and fragrances. Now imagine choosing one single bloom to focus upon.

Focus towards the centre of the flower, becoming absorbed in the richness of its colour. Ask the universe for support to find an answer to your question. Meditate on this for several minutes.

Allow your eyes to drift now along the stem and down into the earth where it is growing. Breathe in and out slowly, deeply and calmly. Open your eyes.

The colour of the bloom that you chose will be the key to helping you find an answer to your question! Have a lovely Spring!

Dr Jane Graham is a Psychotherapist based in Telford specialising in adult ADHD and also trauma. Contact via: www.caretochange.co.uk.

Insurance - it pays to shop around

There are new rules regarding renewal premiums.

From 1 January 2022, new rules from the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) mean that premiums charged to all renewing home and private motor insurance customers by their insurance provider cannot be greater than the price they would charge to an equivalent new customer for the equivalent policy.

Which is good news, it means you should no longer receive a renewal notice with a very much inflated price, however it does mean that, like everything else at the moment, insurance prices in general have gone up.

Useful tips:

When you receive the renewal notice, it's worth ringing the insurer and see if they can offer you a lower price.

Don't leave it until the last minute to renew. It could still pay to shop around as the insurance market will continue to be competitive. If you are considering switching insurer, make sure you check that the policy best meets your needs, the cheapest may not be right for you.

Many people tend to stick to their same insurer year after year, not realising that by switching, they could save a great deal of money. If you're online, there are price comparison sites such as MoneySuperMarket, GoCompare, Uswitch, Compare the Market and Which; these give a lot of helpful advice. You will have to input your details but you can choose not to receive any marketing calls and messages from them.

Avoid 'auto - renewing', which is where they'll charge your card and renew the policy if you don't contact them before the renewal date.

Don't be put off by a less well known company, provided that the policy meets your needs. Many of the smaller companies are underwritten by the bigger companies and the online comparison tables give a customer service rating which will show if customers have received fairly satisfactory service. You may want to contact the company to ensure there are no hidden charges (some of the cheaper ones keep the cost down by, for example, charging you an admin charge for making a change on your policy.)

If you're not online, get a family member to help, or you can ring individual insurance companies to get a quote or go through an insurance broker.

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Wellington Cottage Care Hospital 1913 – 2018

In 1913 Wellington Cottage Hospital opened following a bequest from Ann Bowring in memory of her husband John – the bequest also included a parcel of land which is now Bowring Park.

By the end of World War I in 1918, 4 of the 6 beds in the hospital were given over to the military. Despite this income financial pressures were immense and there was a very real possibility of closure. However, various fundraising activities improved the finances to such an extent that the number of beds increased

to 8. By the end of 1920 the annual number of patients treated was 83 compared with 63 the year before.

By 1924 the Hospital was once again in financial difficulties and eventually became the responsibility of the Shropshire Regional Hospital Board until it was closed in 1990 following the completion of the new Princess Royal Hospital. There then followed a period of little activity although it is believed that it was sometimes used for evacuation practice by the fire brigade.

There were a number of moves to re-open and finally in January 1993 the Wellington and District Cottage Hospital Trust was incorporated under the chairmanship of the Rev Rex Hallam. The Charity was re-named twice to its present title. In 1999 the Trust was paying the NHS rent for the premises. The decision was made to commence operations in a small way and, hopefully, expand operations as it grew.

So in 2001 it opened as a day care centre for one day a week catering for adults with medical needs. This soon became a 5 day week enterprise. Not only were these vulnerable adults cared for, but it gave their carers an opportunity to have relief from their caring duties.

Facilities were excellent in every respect in that the guests (the Trust liked to think of patients as guests coming into our own home) were well cared for – there were bathing and washing facilities, art classes and entertainment.

The Trust was able to expand the premises with two extensions, increasing the daily capacity and it was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2014. Still keeping the original objective in mind, the Trust had plans drawn up for seven self-contained units to provide 24/7 care. However, it was never financially secure to proceed with these and financial pressure reared its ugly head again.

The tendency was for the number of guests to reduce over the winter months because of deaths and moves into permanent care but pick up again in the spring. However, a new system of funding was coming into play whereby claimants were given choice as to how their grants were used. Too many potential guests, usually under pressure from the younger members of the family, were opting not to purchase day care, although the number of self-funding guests remained fairly static. These issues came pretty much out of the blue and over the 2017/2018 winter the number of guests was low, while the overheads remained high (including maintenance of an old building) so the Trust was forced to consider other options. It was relatively well off for total assets, mainly because of the building, but extremely poor as far as cash was concerned.

Alternatives were considered and included the local authority and representatives of the Princess Royal Hospital in the discussions, but possible solutions were very risky and long term and would most likely have resulted in insolvency. Consequently, the decision was taken to stop operations at the end of June 2018.

This was a very hard decision since the Trustees were very much aware of how attached the local people had become to the Cottage Hospital and how well they supported it over the years – a good number were actually born there. Additionally, there were a large number of volunteers and work experience pupils from schools and colleges in the local district, for which local organisations such as Rotary had provided funds for many years.

There then followed a period of settling redundancies, paying bills and disposing of assets including the property. The Trustees considered changing the objectives and starting a fresh venture but that proved too arduous and too risky, so the only alternative was to dissolve the Trust.

The conditions set out by the Charities Commission make it clear that on dissolution, any surplus should be distributed to local charities with similar objectives at the discretion of the Trustees. By far the biggest proportion was given to Severn Hospice (Telford site), with other local charities which look after the wellbeing of the more senior members of the community being given a little help.

Senior's Gym Club For Over 55's FITNESS AND RHYTHM GROUP

Looking for a friendly group, where you can meet new people and keep healthy at the same time?

Join us for our low impact fitness and rhythm sessions. (Exercise to music with a trained instructor)

Wellington Civic & Leisure Centre Wednesdays 2.30pm - 3.30pm

£3.00 per session (first session free), £12 annual membership.

For more information contact 01952 825239/01952 595690

Looking for a trader you can trust – Trading Standards Accredited

The pandemic has led to increased spending on home improvements. It is estimated that 76% of UK homeowners have spent money on renovations in their home during this time. For some, it is to make their home feel more comfortable, for others it is to add value to their property. Whatever the reason, it is always important to do your homework on a company before agreeing to go ahead with the work.

Trading Standards in Telford and across the country have seen an increase in the number of complaints about home improvement work which can range from garden rooms to loft conversions, roofing work to wooden flooring and literally the kitchen sink too.

We have seen complaints from Telford residents, some of whom had paid large deposits for work on their home and then find that they are struggling to get the company back to start the work or in some cases can't track a business down because they haven't got enough details on who they are dealing with.

There are some simple steps you can take to avoid being caught out by the cowboys:

Don't let doorstep callers talk you into a spur of the moment decision however good the deal appears to be.

- Obtain at least three quotes in writing, check all the things you asked for are included in the quote and make sure it includes a timescale.
- Ask how long the trader has been in business and whether they have a business address you can visit.
- Ask if you can see any work they have done for other customers locally.
- If the trader claims to be a member of a trade association, check with the association yourself.
- Avoid paying a large deposit before work starts or materials have been delivered, although be aware that large projects may require staged payments.
- Make sure you obtain proof of payment.

- Don't make a final payment until you are happy that the work has been completed satisfactorily.
- Recommendations from friends or family can be a good way of choosing the right company. You can also search for home improvement businesses, along with other trade areas, that are members of the Trading Standards Accredited Scheme www.tsaccredited.co.uk

Trading Standards Accredited is the only accredited trader scheme where members have been checked by Telford & Wrekin Council Trading Standards, helping you to choose a trader with confidence and support quality local businesses.

All of our members have signed up to the TSA Code of Practice, passed our robust background checks and agree to act responsibly, fairly and honestly. In the unlikely event of a problem, Trading Standards will work with you and the business to agree a resolution.

For more information and to search for TSA members visit our website www.tsaccredited.co.uk

If a job has gone wrong and you need help you can contact the Citizens Advice Helpline on 0808 223 1133 for some advice.

We are currently recruiting new members. If your business is based in Telford and you want it to stand out for all the right reasons take a look at our website. We welcome applications from home improvement companies along with most other trade areas. If you have any queries please email the TSA Team at tsaccredited@telford.gov.uk

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To become a member of Forum 50+, either phone 07932 828333 or 07552 975676 or email us at enquiries@twseniors.org.uk or follow the link 'Contact Us' on our website www.forum50plus.org.uk

Membership is free and open to people resident in the area, in middle and later life, or anybody with a particular interest in older people's issues.

As a member you will, unless you notify us otherwise, receive our newsletter every two months by post or email.

Postal address:

FREEPOST RTGZ-UAGU-TXHJ

Forum 50+

Box 7, Unit D

Stafford Park 9

Telford TF3 3AF

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We welcome contributions from members and readers. Send in your articles, letters, stories, poems, photos, artwork and we'll publish what we can.

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