

Forum 50+ Newsletter – September 2022

Message from the Chairperson, Dave Wright

Hello and welcome, starting like this reminds me of how David Frost opened 'That Was The Week That Was' in the early Sixties. What a few weeks we have had, The Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations and lovely hot weather, although it does have some drawbacks. I hope you've been keeping cool and safe.

As well as more extreme weather we're all facing other challenges such as the rising cost of our energy bills, food and petrol. See page 8 for details of where you can get help if you're struggling financially.

Telford & Wrekin Council are currently seeking views to help in the production of the Ageing Well Strategy, a document setting out service priorities over the next few years to help people 'Age Well'.

At Forum 50+ we are very concerned about how current issues, namely the pressures affecting NHS service delivery and social care services plus the cost of living crisis, will create more challenges in terms of ageing well over the coming years. Ensure you have your say by completing the survey. See page 11 to find out how you can do so.

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on 26th September, but overall it's an opportunity to come along and see us, chat with others and enjoy a hot drink and cake, while finding out more about Forum services.

If you can come along, please do – we would love to see you. In the meantime take care and keep safe, (remember to get your Covid vaccinations see page 4).

All over-50s to be offered COVID-19 booster and flu jab this autumn.

Everyone aged 50 and over will be among those offered a COVID-19 booster and a flu jab this autumn under plans to increase protection against respiratory viruses ahead of winter.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has now published its final recommendations for this autumn's programme.

Under the advice, those eligible for a further dose will be:

- Residents in a care home for older adults and staff working in care homes for older adults.
- Frontline health and social care workers.
- All adults aged 50 and over.
- Those aged 5 to 49 years in a clinical risk group, including pregnant women.
- Those aged 5 to 49 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression.
- Those aged 16 to 49 years who are carers.

In addition, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) will once again be offering the free flu vaccine to additional groups.

The additional groups set to be offered the free flu vaccine will be:

- All adults aged 50 to 64 years
- Secondary school children in years 7, 8 and 9, who will be offered the vaccine in order of school year (starting with the youngest first)

Look out for Betty the Vaccination Bus!

No appointment needed and no need to be registered with a GP. Vaccines are available for those 18 years and over. Spring Booster for over 75s also available.

Betty the Bus will be at: Leegomery Community Centre, Leegate Ave, TF1 6NA
Tuesday 30th August, 11am – 2pm.

Come and see us in Wellington for our AGM 2022.

Annual General Meeting will start at 2.00pm (doors open at 1.30pm).

Or call in after the AGM between 2.45pm and 4pm.

Chat, hot drink and cake.

Find out about Forum 50+ activities including befriending, computer support, exercise classes and volunteering opportunities.

26th September 2022

Wellington Methodist Church, New Hall Rd, Wellington, TF1 1LU.

Free to attend, open to members and non-members.

The AGM agenda can be found later on in the newsletter along with the draft minutes of the 2021 AGM. The Chairperson will present his annual report at the meeting and the annual statement of accounts will be available.

If you are interested in becoming a Trustee of Forum 50+, please get in touch at enquiries@forum50plus.org.uk

Forum Magazine

Like all organisations and individuals, Forum 50+ is having to review its current expenditure to ensure that we make the best use of our resources. It's more important than ever that we allocate a large amount of the funding we receive to help as many people as we can through our direct support services.

Each magazine printed and posted costs around £1.05, and around 38p for magazines distributed in community venues, and as our membership grows, so do the costs. We would like the magazine to remain free to readers but at the same time we need to look at ways to make some savings, which may include reducing the number of editions we publish each year.

How you can help:

Go digital:

Receiving the magazine by email doesn't cost us anything other than production time, so if you are able and willing to receive it digitally, please email us at info@forum50plus.org.uk and let us know.

Donate:

Money is tight for everyone but for whatever amount you can spare, we'll be very grateful and every little will help to keep the magazine in print. Your donation will only be used towards the cost of future editions, printing, packing and postage.

To donate, either:

Send a cheque made payable to Forum 50+, to the address on page 2.

Telephone 07932 828333 to make card payment over the phone.

Donate online by visiting forum50plus.org.uk and using the 'Donate' button on the right.

Update your details

Please ensure that you let us know if you change your address or are moving out of the area, or if a magazine is posted to your home addressed to a previous occupant. Please also let us know if you do not wish to receive any further copies.

Oakengates Senior Social@The Wakes Every Thursday @ 1.30pm

8th September - Curling

15th September - Talk - Exotic Zoo, to be confirmed

22nd September - Film & Cake

29th September - Live Music with Kerry Young

6th October - Autumn Walk

13th October - Live Music, Tadlop on Tour

20th October - Bingo

Cost £4, includes tea and coffee.

For tickets please call in at the Wakes, Oakengates, TF2 6EP

or online at www.thewakes.org.uk

For enquiries call 01952 567500

Volunteers sought for a role with a difference

Volunteers are invited to apply to join the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) at HM Oakwood Oak Drive Featherstone, which is the largest prison in England.

As a team member, you could be talking to prisoners, checking they are being given access to healthcare and training or observing how well those at risk of self-harm are being treated. You might look into problems faced by prisoners, ranging from lost property to bullying allegations.

No qualifications are needed and full training will be given, and travel expenses paid.

For more details visit www.imb.org.uk/join-now/current-vacancies

Cost of Living - what help is available

Energy Bills Support Scheme - all households in Great Britain with a domestic electricity connection are eligible for the support.

The £400 discount will be paid in six monthly instalments. In October and November, households will see a £66 discount, this will rise to £67 a month from December through to March 2023. It will be paid on a monthly basis, regardless of when consumers usually pay their bills.

Direct debit customers will automatically get a deduction to the amount collected, or as a refund to their bank account after the bill is paid.

Standard credit customers, payment card customers and smart prepayment meter customers will see the discount automatically applied as a credit in the first week of each month.

Households with a traditional prepayment meter will receive vouchers in first week of each month and will be able to redeem these at their normal top-up point.

Homes without a direct relationship with an energy supplier, such as park home residents, will receive equivalent financial help, with more details to be announced in the autumn.

Tenants who rent properties where their energy bills are included in their rent should also receive the discount.

Other financial support:

- Households receiving means-tested benefits, including Pension Credit, will get an additional cost of living payment of £650 – in two instalments, in July and the second later this year. You need to have received, or begun a claim for the benefits by 25 May.
- Those who will have reached state pension age by 19 - 25 September 2022, will be entitled to a £300 payment, in November or December.
- A disability payment of £150 will be made in September to those who received/made a claim for, non-means-tested disability benefits by 25 May.

Telford & Wrekin Council has been allocated funds by the Department for Work and Pensions which will provide a small grant to pension age residents receiving Pension Credit Guarantee Credit or Savings Credit and who are in receipt of either Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction. Awards will usually be made in the form of supermarket vouchers. The council will contact residents directly who qualify with details of how to redeem their voucher. There will also be an application process for residents who are suffering severe financial difficulties.

Beware the scammers

The government has warned consumers to be alert to potential scammers claiming to be involved in the energy bill payment process and stresses that you will not be asked for your bank details during the process.

Sources of advice and support:

Telford Energy Advice (TEA) offers support including the best deals on gas/electricity, accessing grants for home energy/heating improvements and advice about keeping warm at home. Contact 0800 677 1952 or email: advice@mea.org.uk

Telford Crisis Support - apply for food support, tel 01952 380400.

Benefits advice and help with filling in forms: Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin tel 01743 233123 and Citizens Advice Telford, tel 01952 567193.

Debt advice - Citizens Advice Telford.

Tips for saving money on food

- If you have a freezer, keep it well stocked.
- Don't be tempted by offers, eg 3 for 2, unless you use the items regularly.
- More expensive doesn't always mean better – look for supermarkets' own brands or value brands.
- Try other supermarkets such as Lidl and Aldi too if you haven't before. It's worth trying Home Bargains and B&M Bargains too.
- Look for yellow-sticker discounts and use supermarket coupons.
- Consider eating less meat.
- Write a meal plan and shop for the week, you'll waste less that way.
- Cook from scratch - look for budget recipes using low cost ingredients.
- Don't waste food, plan a meal to use leftovers. Some leftovers can be frozen.
- Don't throw away food if you don't need to – know the difference between a 'best-before' and 'use-by' date:

'Use-by' dates mean you should throw food away after this date, otherwise it could be a health risk. 'Best-before' dates mean food is usually still safe to eat after this date but may have lost some quality, eg bread may be a bit dry. Be guided by your smell, sight and taste.

Environment & Transport Action Group Ken Buttress, Chair of ETAG

Following a very useful meeting with the borough council, timetables are now to be found on the back wall at Telford Central Bus Station. Maintenance of the bus station should be improving as should personal security and safety, subject that is, to help from the Telford Town Centre management. However other issues may have to wait until they can be included in the 2023/ 2024 budget.

Arriva have told us that there are to be substantive roadworks on Ironbridge Road and Lees Farm Roundabout until September which may well impact on services 1, 2, 4, 8, 18, 19a. They also said that they had recently ran a trial with an improved Mercedes Electric Demonstrator bus with improved batteries, to check on the range which it could manage to travel.

The new electronic displays are up and running at Wellington Bus Station but some bus stops elsewhere using off-grid electronic displays do not seem to be very successful or to be giving correct timetable information as yet.

Turning now to trains, we note that the new 'secret garden' at Wellington Railway Station seems to have been completed – secret that is because it can only be accessed from a 'staff only' car parking area!

We continue to keep an eye on the borough council's legal notices and to liaise with the council about proposed speed restrictions.

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.

Bulky item collections are now cheaper

Telford & Wrekin Council has lowered the price for having large items collected. The cost of having 1 - 3 items taken away has been reduced from £18 to £15.

If you're aged 65 - 79, or have a long standing illness or disability, you are entitled to one free collection per year, and two free if you're aged 80 or over. Telford Loyalty Card holders get 10% discount and those in receipt of Council Tax or Housing Benefit, 50% off for 2 collections. Book your collection by calling 01952 384384 or by visiting the council's website.

Ageing Well Strategy

Together with Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin and a range of local organisations, Telford & Wrekin Council are running an Ageing Well Consultation to find out what support our residents need to live well and independently for longer.

We want to better shape services for the future for you and your family.

Take part in the survey online at:

www.healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.co.uk/news/2022-07-04/ageing-well-survey-share-your-views

You can request a paper copy of the survey or alternative formats, by emailing :

AgeingWellConsultation2022@telford.gov.uk
or calling 01952 380536 (weekdays, 9am - 5pm).

LOVE TO RUN? By Paul Kalinauckas

I used to hate running until I discovered the potential health benefits of recreational running. Unfit and overweight at the age of 58 years old, I was struggling to tie my shoelaces. I decided enough was enough and knew that I needed to increase my activity rates as I had a somewhat sedentary job, office based and hunched over a computer.

Then I spotted a newspaper article about the launch of a Beginners Running Course by a local running club. Thinking this was worth a go, I duly turned up in Telford Town Park to find over 80 people there. After a friendly, welcoming introduction, off we went with intervals of 1 minute running followed by 4 minutes walking. This is a piece of cake I thought until subsequent sessions changed to more running

and less walking. However, I was able to keep up even though my body complained a little bit as I struggled to adapt. Fortunately, I liked the social side of running and used to enjoy a good chat whilst out on our running sessions, making new friends along the way.

Now, some 10 years later at the age of 68 years young, I have seen massive improvements in my health and well-being. The new me is slimmer and lighter having achieved my optimum weight. As a convert to recreational running, I also qualified as a Run Leader with England Athletics and took an additional coaching qualification. Now I lead a recreational runners' session every Wednesday at 5.00 pm in Bowring Park, Wellington. It's free of charge and a very friendly group, so if you would like to have a go as well, do please join us. Just turn up in a pair of trainers, shorts or leggings and t-shirt and give it a go. If you want to go further afield, I also lead a Beginners Running Group at Attingham Park National Trust every Tuesday at 6.20 pm, for which they make a small charge. It may be sensible to check with your doctor first if you have existing health conditions but recreational running is always at a nice easy pace.

Feel free to contact Paul Kalinauckas on 07802 385529 for further details or search on line for Bowring Runners or Attingham Park.

Exercise Classes

Yoga for all abilities

Tues 9.45am - 10.45am

Leegomery Community Centre, Leegate, TF1 6NA

Chair Yoga

Weds 10.00am - 11.00am

Dawley Town Hall, High St, Dawley, TF4 3JR

Menoga - Yoga for Men

Thurs 9.15am - 10.15am

Hadley Community Centre, High St, Hadley, TF1 5NL

For all the above, call Anne-Marie on 07734 107383,
email: yogawithannemarie@gmail.com (After 1st Sept please contact Forum 50+ for enquiries about our Yoga classes, as a new teacher will be taking over.

Seated Exercise

Tues 1pm - 2pm

The Wakes, Theatre Sq, Oakengates, TF2 6EP

Call Sarah on 07821 739943

Exercise for All!

Weds 10am - 11am

St Leonard's Church, Alma Ave, Malinslee, TF4 2DS

Call Rebecca on 07773 852493

Tai Chi, plus tea & chat

Fridays 10am - 11am

Dawley Bank Baptist Church, Park Rd, Dawley Bank, TF4 2BB

Call 07570 808306

Swimming

Find out about Adults only sessions, Over 60s sessions, Women Only, Lane Swimming and Aquafit, at:

Abraham Darby Sports & Leisure Centre, tel 01952 382770

Newport Swimming Pool, tel 01952 382740

Oakengates Leisure Centre, tel 01952 382810

Wellington Civic & Leisure Centre, tel 01952 382810

Or visit www.telfordandwrekinleisure.co.uk/info/4/swimming

Hadley Learning Centre, tel 01952 388470 pool closed until 4th September),
thecircleathlc.co.uk/swimming-pool

Much Wenlock Leisure Centre, tel 01952 727629

shropshire.gov.uk/shropshire-leisure-time/much-wenlock-leisure-centre

Interested in cold water swimming?

Check out TOWS Facebook Group - Telford Open water swimming are looking to secure a location locally for a weekly Open Water swim session.

Visit www.wildswimming.co.uk to find Shropshire locations.

You can also swim outdoors at Go2Stay, Emstrey, Shrewsbury.

www.love2stay.co.uk

AGM 2022 26th September 2022

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Minutes of the AGM, 11th October 2021
3. Chairperson's Report 2021/22
4. Presentation of Accounts Apr 2021 - Mar 2022
5. Election of Trustees 2022/23
- 6 Date of next AGM 2023

Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday 11th October 2021, at Dawley Christian Centre.

1. Welcome:

Chairperson Dave Wright opened the meeting by welcoming members.

2. Minutes of the 2019 AGM, Monday 23rd September 2019 (2020 AGM cancelled): Members agreed unanimously to accept them by a show of hands.

3. Chairpersons Report:

The Chairperson presented her report. No questions were raised.

4. Presentation of Accounts 2020/21:

The Treasurer presented the audited 2020/21 annual accounts. The Forum came to the end of its Lottery funding in September 2021, but has secured a further 3 years of Lottery funding. The Treasurer asked for the accounts to be accepted. Members agreed unanimously.

5. Election of Trustees 2021/22

The constitution states that trustees hold office for three consecutive years and that at every AGM two trustees stand down. Sheila Pitts and Bob Groom will step down, but Bob Groom wishes to be considered for re-election, along with Stephen Reynolds. Both appointments were agreed unanimously by a show of hands.

One nomination for Chairperson, Dave Wright. This was agreed unanimously by a show of hands.

6. Date of next AGM

This will take place in September 2022.

The 2020 AGM was cancelled due to Covid19, in line with Charity Commission guidance.

Want to reach out but don't know how?

I wrote a blog last year that made suggestions on how to reach out to people who may be going through some difficult life challenges. Therefore, I thought it might be helpful to write this blog as I have recently been privy to observing some people's reactions to some life changing situations.

Life changing situations conjure up all sorts of reactions, from all sorts of people. Some people plough on as though nothing has happened and instead prefer to 'keep their heads down'. Others want to talk about their feelings and thoughts and appreciate contact from anyone who'll listen. I think I can categorically say that whatever camp you sit in we all appreciate the thoughts of others. Most of us, benefit from contact or enquiries from friends and family, especially when we are experiencing difficult times. There is nothing like receiving a text from a loved one, it can boost the morale no end and most importantly helps us to feel that we are in people's thoughts.

I understand that many of us find this contact difficult and often either put it off altogether or keep contact down to the bare minimum. I hear people say "I don't know what to say" or "I don't want to upset them". I can fully understand this however, if a friend or relative is going through a difficult time maybe we ought to think about putting their feelings first and not our own, I'm sure we can experience a little bit of discomfort in order to help another.

I'm pretty sure that most people in this circumstance don't expect friends or family to solve their problems or mind read about what they may or may not want. Most of the time they just want to know that someone is thinking of them, full stop.

Sometimes people mind read about what the other person is wanting or feeling and say things like: "I didn't contact you as I thought you'd want to be left alone". It might be an idea to ask what support or contact that person might like, rather than assuming they don't want any? Recently I heard someone say, "I really want to speak to you but understand you might not be ready", I thought this was a great way of putting it! It's much better than the usual fly away comment "You know where I am"! The chances of anyone contacting you after saying that are so remote, it might be better to say, "Can I text you from time to time to see if you are alright, is that okay?"

The other thing worth mentioning is saying things like: "I know how you feel", "Always think positively" or worse still "look on the bright side" are really not helpful at all. I'm sure anyone going through a life changing event is desperately trying to be positive and it being pointed out to them is just NOT helpful.

At times like these people feel isolated enough without feeling further isolated by friends and family 'leaving them alone'. Whether it's for the right reason or not. Unfortunately, they won't know that.

I hope this blog has been informative and I hope it has given you a few ideas on how to 'reach out' in a supportive and caring way. Good luck.....

www.dismart-coach.co.uk dianne.srsmart@gmail.com

Tel: 07896 955 911

Interested in volunteering but worried about the regular commitment?

Forum 50+ offers flexible roles to suit you. Activity can be weekly, fortnightly, monthly or occasionally.

- Support our friendship groups.
- Support someone by accompanying them on a walk, trip to the shops or café or local community activity.
- Support someone by phone.

Please get in touch if you can help. Full support and guidance will be given and any travel costs and other out of pocket expenses will be paid.

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

Email: enquiries@forum50plus.org.uk

We need volunteers! Please help us to help others.

Support with computers, tablets & smartphones

Need help getting started? Afraid of technology?

We can help you learn at your pace. We can show you how to stay safe online and avoid scams, explore new things and get more out of 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

Tea & Tech Sessions - Tablets and smartphones

Who is it for?

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!

- The sessions will be held once every fortnight, at the Independent Living Centre.
- We can support you to tailor your device to suit you.
- We understand that coronavirus is still a concerning matter. Covid-19 precautions will be in place during the sessions to keep everyone as safe as possible!

Will there really be tea?

YES! There will also be coffee and other refreshments.

How can I find out more about Tea and Tech?

Please contact the Nadine on 01952 240209 or email nadine.buchanan@tandwcvcs.org.uk to register your interest.

STARTING AUTUMN 2022 ON THURSDAYS

Session 1: 15th September	Session 4: 6th October
Session 2: 22nd September	Session 5: 13th October
Session 3: 29th September	11am – 1pm

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

Please register your interest by contacting Nadine on 01952 240209 or email nadine.buchanan@tandwcvcs.org.uk to register your interest.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Loan a Tablet!

Telford and Wrekin CVS have a limited number of tablets you can loan for up to three months!

Age UK – Celebrate the Jubilee by joining us for an afternoon of singing, dancing, and comedy.

Tuesday 20th September 2022, 2pm – 5pm.

The Place, Oakengates, TF2 6EP.

Call 01743 233123 for more information.

Feel like a victim of your day?

Dr Jane Graham

These days we hear so much about the importance of Positive Psychology. We are told that we should focus on our strengths and ignore our shortcomings. That we should not notice how amazing we are and ignore any negative feelings about ourselves.

For many years we have been bombarded with positive affirmations. You know, those slogans that we are supposed to tell ourselves to make ourselves feel better. Slogans like; "I am perfect in every way", or "I've got this".

Maybe for some people, they work, at least some of the time. For others though, they can feel hollow. Just thinking it doesn't make it so.

So to counteract all this positivity, while recognising that feeding negativity doesn't help either, I am going to bang the drum for finding a healthy balance.

For recognising that sometimes the day has felt just awful and we can just end up feeling a bit battered and bruised. For recognising that it's okay to acknowledge that we haven't 'smashed it' or 'been amazing' – no, in fact we have just about survived it. But at least we survived it!

There are two wonderfully helpful types of therapy that help us find balance.

Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT) helps us learn to find compassion for ourselves. Often we find it easy to feel compassionate towards other people, but how often do we give ourselves the gift of compassion? Many of us have a critical voice lurking somewhere inside our head that is quick to tell us when we think we have messed up. Wouldn't it be so much nicer to say to ourselves, "that was a tough day but I did the best I could today".

Another helpful therapy is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). ACT is all about staying in the present and mindfully noticing your thoughts and feelings without passing judgement on yourself. Loving what is, warts and all.

I have to say these therapies feel a lot kinder to, and more accepting of, ourselves than the ones that advocate ignoring some of the bits of us that may not be shiny and upbeat; but yet the bits that make us human. At times we all struggle, with life and with ourselves. Sometimes that's just how it goes. Without the rain, how do we know how good the sun feels. We are all a work in progress and do you know what, that's okay.

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

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Telford & Wrekin Bowls Club

Do you ever feel you would like to participate in an activity that provides friendship and fresh air in the company of like minded individuals?

Bowls is a sport that can be enjoyed by anyone and no previous experience is necessary. After a few games the participant soon develops a capacity to indulge in this rewarding activity which follows relatively simple rules. Participation can improve your physical fitness and general wellbeing and the performance difference between age and genders is much less marked than in other sports.

2022 marks the club's 40th anniversary. It was the first level green bowling club in Shropshire where the crown green in Hartshill Park was converted for lawn green bowling. It's one of the only three lawn greens in Shropshire.

The club is always ready to recruit new members. It offers the opportunity to play in competitions within the club and with outside clubs. It is up to the individual to decide how much they wish to participate. Club nights are held at 5pm every Thursday between April and October (weather permitting) where a warm welcome waits.

For more information or to enjoy a taste of what's involved, contact the club captain on: 07724 805839.

Why not give it a go?..

Quilting

I belong to a quilting group which meets at Horsehay Methodist Chapel on Tuesdays 10.30 – 2 pm. We were wondering if anybody at FORUM 50 would like to join us. We pay £15 per calendar month which pays for the room use and tea, coffee and biscuits. We are a friendly group and would welcome new members. Help is given.

Contact Joy Clayton on 01952 248012.

Sequence Dance

Monthly Sequence Dance sessions at Ketley Community Centre, TF1 5AN, on the third Friday of every month. Teaching and dancing 6.45pm – 7.15pm then put into practice. £2.50 per person. Learn the steps and join in - please feel free to bring your own refreshments .

For more information please contact Vincent or Jean on 01952 619934.

Singing

The Acorn Singers are an enthusiastic group of singers aged 50+. The weekly sessions are fun, informal and dementia friendly. Cost £6 per session.

Ever Wednesday 3.15pm—5pm, at the Wakes, Oakengates, TF2 6EP.

Contact Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin, 01743 233123

Email:enquiries@ageukstw.org.uk

Line Dancing

Learn to Line Dance and keep active!

Thursday 1pm—2.30pm, Hadley Community Centre, TF1 5NL.

£3 including refreshments.

Contact Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin, 01743 233123

Email:enquiries@ageukstw.org.uk

Book Club

Meeting monthly, every first Tuesday and Thursday of the month.

Tuesdays 10 - 11am, Thursdays 1 - 2pm.

Hadley Community Centre, TF1 5NL.

Contact Vera on 07858 830095.

Tea, Chat & New Friends

Come along to one of Forum 50+'s friendship groups. We currently meet at Shawbirch, Trench, Hadley, Oakengates, Dawley and a new group will start soon in Madeley.

Contact us for details.

Tel 07552 975676/07932 828333.

Telford Millennium Nature Reserve

I am taking this kindly offered opportunity to reach an audience who may be looking to get involved in something different this autumn, and by different I mean spending your valuable free time getting wet, cold, wind-blown and tired outdoors and receiving nothing in return! Well I say nothing, I have it on good authority that a real sense of achievement, satisfaction and wellbeing can be attained, along with a cup of tea and a biscuit, so that's something. I am talking about volunteering your time to help out the natural world on one of your lesser known local green spaces, the Telford Millennium Nature Reserve in East Ketley.

This little 44 acre site may not have the prominence of the Wrekin, the fantastic variety of the Telford Town Park or the tranquil beauty offered by a walk down the Severn Gorge, but what it lacks in these departments it makes up for in its great importance as a haven and stronghold for a surprisingly broad array of wildlife within the urban environment. The reserve has a diverse mix of habitats with its woodlands, heathlands, ponds and wildflower filled grassland meaning it's teeming with life, from birds to amphibians, reptiles to small mammals and a whole wonderful array of invertebrates thrown in for good measure but that's not to say that it can't become even better with some help.

Four years ago I was employed by the charity Groundwork West Midlands to manage this site after a long period of neglect with the intention of restoring its habitats and developing the site into a fantastic resource for nature, recreation, local engagement and the education of local young people. We have managed to take some big strides towards our goals but what we have never really managed is directly engaging with local people in the management, maintenance and development of the place.

So here is the pitch, I would like to invite anyone who would like to give some time, however great or small, to help out in any way they see fit. This could simply be joining in on a litter pick, helping on the butterfly and birds surveys in the summer or joining in on the weekly practical work days conducting tasks from felling a tree to fixing a fence and everything in between.

I promise to bring the tea, coffee and biscuits and guarantee (or at least strongly suppose) that you'll enjoy doing something fun and rewarding which brings you closer to the nature and other people in the area which you live. If anyone is interested they can reach me on 07730 688924, or via email at peter.mcnee@groundwork.org.uk or through our Facebook page, Telford Millennium Nature Reserve.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and I hope to maybe meet some of you one day.

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