

# Forum 50+ Newsletter – May 2023

## Message from the Chairperson, Dave Wright

We hope you had a good Easter and are now looking forward to a warm summer. If the weather is good Telford Town Park is a lovely place to go and maybe have a picnic or just sit and watch the world go by.

A huge thank you to members who replied to confirm they still wanted to receive this magazine. If anyone tells you they haven't received their copy, they can still request to go back on our distribution list. We will also continue to put copies community venues for people to pick up.

Unfortunately, we're having to cancel our Freepost service, so if you write to us after 25th May, you will need to use a stamp.

In July, we'll be holding our first big event since Covid - Over 50s Wellbeing Fun Day! Please join us, it'll be free to attend but bring some money for the raffle. There'll be a chance to try new activities, speak to several organisations, and to have a cuppa and a good chat.

Like all charities we are always looking for new volunteers so if you do have a spare hour or two per week or even per month please get in touch with Chris and she will explain where we need help. Have a good look in this edition if you want to join our exercise classes or social events, which are all great opportunities to meet new friends, in a friendly safe environment.

Remember, making every minute count is important and sometimes even simple events can bring a little happiness. Keep safe and if you need help please ask.

(Next edition will be published in August 2023.)

## Over 50s Wellbeing Fun Day

Forum 50+ is delighted to invite you to join us at our Wellbeing Fun Day event taking place 12th July, 1pm - 5pm at the Anstice, Madeley.

Keeping fit, active and meeting up with others is a great way to maintain our mental and physical wellbeing.

Find out about local activities such as dance, exercise, crafts, music, and even have a go, plus there'll be lots of organisations there to provide advice and information. There'll also be a chance to enjoy a head or hand massage, as well as refreshments and a raffle. (Lunch not included)

Just call in, no need to book, entry is free.

## Environment & Transport Action Group Ken Buttress, Chair of ETAG

### Trains

Transport for Wales has had to withdraw some of their units for maintenance checks, leaving them short. To try and keep as many services running as on all their routes, their trains through Telford and Wellington only go to Wolverhampton for the time being and not to either Birmingham New Street or Birmingham International. Even so we are aware from press reports that all trains to Aberystwyth were cancelled on two separate days recently.

### Buses

The two recently introduced bus services nos 100 and 101 have now been joined by the 102, 103, 104 and 105. The 102 and 103 run between Newport and Wellington on Monday to Friday only and both call at the hospital as well. These services are being provided by Chaserider and Select Bus on behalf of Telford and Wrekin Council and are not part of the rest of the network run by Arriva. The government initiative where the maximum single bus fare is £2, extended to the end of June, applies and you can use your bus pass on these services too.

We are aware that the timetables for these new services are difficult to track down but can be found on [www.telford.gov.uk/busservices](http://www.telford.gov.uk/busservices) if you have a computer. They are all to be reviewed in May, so 'use them or lose them'. Go for a ride, and just watch the scenery go by, and let the council know what you think of them, but take your own flask of tea with you!

### Arriva

We are talking to Arriva about the many complaints about buses missing from the schedules and just not turning up, particularly on the 5A, 7, and 12 services. There are also occasional problems with the number of children's buggies conflicting with wheelchairs/mobility scooters at particular times of day, due to some services being reduced to hourly, and the varying capacity of different types of bus.

Arriva have been recruiting and training new drivers and they've said that some of the new drivers should be behind the steering wheel soon.

They've also told us that they struggle at times to maintain service frequencies on some routes due to the number of roadworks, temporary traffic lights and road closures with route diversions in the borough.

New bus shelters are planned by the council and Arriva propose to introduce vehicles with increased capacity on the busy X5 Telford to Shrewsbury.

The Arriva network is also subject to the Government initiative for January to March, now extended to the end of June, with a maximum single bus fare of £2, and you can of course continue to use a bus pass if you hold one, within the permitted times.

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.

## Check your passport if you're travelling this summer

Travellers who have not used their passport for a while are being urged to check it conforms to the post-Brexit rules for entering the EU – because if it doesn't, you will almost certainly be denied boarding this summer.

Prior to Brexit, UK passport holders could travel in and out of the EU as long as they held a valid passport, even one that expired the day after their return. But now UK travellers trying to enter the Schengen zone are being turned away on a daily basis by airline staff at boarding gates – in most cases because their UK passport was issued more than 10 years ago. In terms of flights and ferries to mainland Europe, passengers will also be denied boarding if their passport expires less than three months after their return date. Previously, it was thought that UK travellers needed at least six months left, although the EU has since clarified the three-month requirement.

The new rules apply to UK passport holders travelling to any EU country (except Ireland), plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, the Vatican and Switzerland.

If your passport will be more than 10 years old on the day of entry, you will not be allowed in. The “over 10-year” problem came about because, for many years, those renewing their passport before the previous one expired were able to add any remaining time left. Prior to September 2018, you could have up to nine months added to the replacement's 10-year length – meaning your passport could be valid for as long as 10 years and nine months.

(Based on an article in the Guardian.)

## Ageing Gracefully By Paul Kalinauckas

Ageing is a privilege as it brings wisdom and freedom to enjoy life to the full. Over fifties are responsible for over 50% of consumer spending, so if you are fortunate to have the means, go out and enjoy yourself. Perhaps we should change the name of this series of articles to Ageing Disgracefully? The famous (or should I say infamous) actor Dame Helen Mirren said “It's much better to age disgracefully. You may as well enjoy it.”

One of the greatest benefits of ageing is the fearlessness it can bring. So why not enjoy the summer and dress up in brightly coloured clothes or a new pair of designer spectacles. Go for a walk into the wonderful green spaces throughout Shropshire and on your doorstep in the borough of Telford and Wrekin. Experiment with trying or cooking some different kinds of foods to stimulate the palate. See what activities there are in your local area and give them a go. Many local organisers of a wide range of activities welcome new members with open arms and you may even make new friends. Go on and give it a go.

You may hear that older people experience loneliness more than others but the reality is that younger people, are three times more likely to experience loneliness than us. Do you know of any younger people that you could say hello to or give them a smile when you're out and about? We can be role models for them as we have so much more lived experience to share.

We also generally have more disposable income, tend to own our homes and travel more. We are in the decade of Healthy Ageing, defined by the United Nations as a decade to improve the lives of older people. This is all about staying active, maintaining mental and physical health, and contributing to society. We all have so much to give.

## 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 Sahara on 07475 500227.

### **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

## Breath Work & Meditation

with Sahara

Through meditation and breathing awareness we find a deep state of release from our muscular, mental and emotional tension, allowing the whole system to relax.

Wednesdays 11.15am - 12.15pm

Bring your own yoga mat. (Pillow and blanket recommended)

Can be done seated.

Open to all ages 18+

£3. Discount applies if attending Chair Yoga session at 10am.

Contact Sahara 07475 500227

email: sarah@bridgnorthyoga.co.uk

## Seniors Gym Club

GYM and/or FITNESS & RHYTHM EXERCISE for OVER 55's

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

Why not join one of our low impact fitness sessions led by a qualified instructor.

The following group sessions are currently available to Club members:

### GYM SESSIONS

Mondays 2.30 - 3.30pm

Thursdays 2.30 - 3.30pm

Both at Abraham Darby Sports and Leisure Centre.

Fridays 11am -12pm

Horsehay Village Golf Centre.

### FITNESS & RHYTHM SESSIONS

(Exercise with background music)

Wednesdays 2.30 – 3.30pm at Wellington Civic and Leisure Centre. £3.00 per session (first session free).

£12.00 annual club membership.

For more information please contact: Kevin 01952 825239 or Olga 01952 595690.

## Calling all people with type 2 diabetes!

A great way to learn how to gain more control of your Type 2 diabetes at a time and place that suits you.

The courses run on the same day for 6 weeks and are 2½ hours per session. The content of each week is as follows:

Week 1 – What is diabetes, Explanation of blood results and medications, Goal Setting.

Week 2 – Nutrition for Health, Dietary Approaches, Fat Awareness, Goal Setting.

Week 3 – Carbohydrate Awareness, Goal Setting.

Week 4 – Psychology of Eating, Reading Food Labels, Physical Activity, Goal Setting.

Week 5 – Possible short and long-term complications, Goal Setting.

Week 6 - Q&A session and where to access more information.

This is an award winning course run by Shropshire Community Health, which has proven to reduce the main risk factors for diabetes including HbA1c, blood pressure and cholesterol.

These courses are run in various venues throughout Shropshire and Telford. You are also able to sign up to do the course via virtual means using Microsoft Teams, should the face to face option not be suitable.

To find out more, or book a place, please contact 01743 277696 or email [shropcom.xpertdiabetes@nhs.net](mailto:shropcom.xpertdiabetes@nhs.net)

## It's never too late to get digital!

Support with computers, tablets & smartphones

Need help getting started? Afraid of technology? Having problems?

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 - 3pm

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

Wednesdays, 11am - 1pm

Help at Home is also available (charges will apply for more than 4 hours of home support)

Contact us by calling 07932 828333/07552 975676

Email: [enquiries@forum50plus.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@forum50plus.org.uk)

## New Digital Skills courses for over 65s

Free, fun, friendly and supported by digital champion volunteers.

Tea and coffee provided.

6 x two hour sessions.

Bring your own smart phone or tablet device, if you have one.

Topics include emailing, online shopping and internet safety.

To find out about dates and location or register your interest, please call 01952 380000. Or visit [www.telford.gov.uk/getconnected](http://www.telford.gov.uk/getconnected)

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Platinum Home Support

Do you need support? Would you benefit from a personal home support worker? Let us take the stress away by doing household tasks that can take up your energy and leave you to rest while we do what we enjoy. We provide regular home services to those who need it.

We can include in our time:

- Household chores such as light dusting, vacuuming, bed making and laundry.
- Picking up shopping or prescriptions.
- We're available for pop-ins to make sure family members are OK, offer medication reminders and also prepare meals and drinks.
- We're also available to help loved ones with food shopping and chaperoning to social events, clubs and appointments.
- Companionship to help improve mood, isolation and loneliness.

Call Nicola Hayward, 07814 567248, email [nicola@platinumhomesupport.co.uk](mailto:nicola@platinumhomesupport.co.uk)

## Do you or someone you know, have a Stoma?

The Shropshire B.O.Ts. (Bums on Tums) meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month at Hope Church Room 1, Market Gate, Oswestry, SY11 2NR, at 2pm.

We are always looking for new members so if you are interested in joining us we'd love to meet you.

For more details call: Irene 01691 238357 or Carol 01691 671624

Email: [ireneconstable@phonecoop.coop](mailto:ireneconstable@phonecoop.coop)

## Do Something Creative!

As many of you will know, I love creating. Whether, tending to a flower bed, making candles, taking a pallet apart or writing, I love it. I speak to a number of people who 'wish' they could be creative; they have the notion that to be creative means being arty or crafty. I assure them this is not the case.

Creativeness can be anything that has an end result; even doing a crossword is creative as there is a start, a middle and an end. Something to show for the time spent is a creative occupation. The necessity to be creative has waned a bit as we can go out and buy a cake, a jumper or anything for that matter. However, my parents for example would 'make and mend' as they didn't have the finances to do anything else. Although laborious, it probably (without realising it) gave them a great deal of satisfaction in that the darned sock or finished cake meant they had achieved something.

I'm a firm believer in achievement as many of my clients will tell you. In some ways, I think it's a pity that we no longer 'need' to do things, everything is far too easy to flick a switch or press a button and bang.....it's ordered. This includes me!

I have a friend who finds that being creative, (making exquisite cakes) takes her out of her usual headspace and forces her concentration to think about the intricate art of cake making, rather than perhaps, worrying about her situation. Which by the way is extremely stressful.

I remember some years ago, a colleague tore into me about my enjoyment of making jam, she said “who did I think I was, the W I”. I pointed out, that what could be better than enjoying seeing your fruit grow, to pick it, then make it into delicious jam to share and enjoy. I think she regretted belittling me and apologised.

So, what does being creative do for us? It helps us to problem solve, this in turn helps our brain activity, which in turn is very good for keeping our mental health on an even keel. It also helps us feel satisfied in achieving something, this is a great resilience builder.

So, the next time you feel a bit flat in mood or bored, think of something creative to do, it will lift your mood and give you some level of satisfaction. Something we all need.....not just Mick Jagger!

<https://www.dismart-coach.co.uk/>   dianne.srsmart@gmail.com

Tel: 07896 955 911

## Early summer - the perfect time to start walking

If you would like to venture out for a walk with a group of friendly people, why not join a Ramblers Wellbeing walk?

Walking for health has been taking place in Telford for over 25 years and recently became part of Ramblers Wellbeing walks. There are 17 walks throughout the week and in many parts of the town. They range from short walks (Grade 1) for those starting out walking, which can be as short as ten minutes and as long as 30 depending on the needs of the group. Many of the walks are Grade 2 which are up to an hour long and then Grade 3 up to 90 minutes. (Please see the calendar opposite.)

The benefits of walking are numerous the first being that you meet other people socially. You don't need any expensive equipment just a good pair of shoes and a waterproof. There are health benefits ,from helping your heart and lungs, lowering blood pressure, weight maintenance, and looking after your bones and joints. It is also good for your mental health. There is nothing quite like meeting up with friends and enjoying the fresh air, then having a cup of tea at the end of the walk. All the walks are free and are led by experienced walk leaders who are all volunteers.

In order to get started all you have to do is turn up at the starting point of any of our walks. It's a good idea to arrive ten minutes early on the first day so that a walk leader can take your details. You are free to take part in as many walks throughout the week as you like. Many of our walkers enjoy new walks and discovering more of the beautiful natural spaces throughout the town. Telford has been nicknamed the Forest City, and the number of trees parklands and beautiful open spaces that intertwine the town is remarkable.

## Calendar of Walks

### **Monday**

Leegomery and Apley at 10am and 2pm, the meeting point is the post box by Leegomery Community Centre TF1 6NA, Grade 2 and 3.



## **Tuesday**

Donnington meet at ASDA TF2 7RX at 10.15am, Grade 2 and 3.

Horsehay and Lawley meet at the Horsehay Golf Club TF4 3BT at 2pm, Grade 2.

## **Wednesday**

Hollinswood and Randlay meet every last Wednesday in the month at 10.30am at Hollinswood Pavilion TF3 2DN, Grade 2.

Coalbrookdale at the Community Centre Coalbrookdale TF8 7DX at 1pm, Grade3.

Madeley at Court Street Medical Practice TF7 5EE at 2pm, Grade 1.

Wellington at the Leisure Centre TF1 1LX at 2pm, Grade 1,2 and 3.

## **Thursday**

St George's meet 10.30am in the car park behind the cricket club TF2 9LU, Grade 2.

Dawley every third Thursday of the month at 1.30pm Holy Trinity Car Park TF4 3NH, Grade 2.

Lilleshall every Thursday 6pm at the Last Inn Car Park TF10 9EJ, Grade 3.

## **Friday**

Shawbirch starting 10.15am at the Woolpack car park TF5 0LW , Grade 1 and 2.

## **Sunday**

Madeley meet at Tesco Supermarket TF7 5AB, 10.30am, Grade 3.

If you would like to find out more please contact:

info@walkingforhealthtelfordandwrekin.org.uk or phone 07512 123995.

## **Recycle duvets and pillows**

Following on from a notice in the last magazine about passing on old duvets and pillows, Forum 50+ member Katherine has kindly let us know that you can take these items to the Dunelm store on the Forge retail park which has a collection box.

## **Newport Cottage Care Centre**

Newport Cottage Care Centre is based in Newport, Shropshire and is a day care centre caring for the elderly and those living with dementia within the community. We provide person centred care and a holistic approach to each individual whilst promoting personal choice.

Our staff are highly trained in assisting our clients in all aspects of personal care, whilst promoting dignity, independence and respect.

There are opportunities for our clients to take part in a wide variety of activities such as arts and crafts classes, exercise classes, quizzes and other activities or just to join their friends for a chat. We also regularly have various entertainers that visit the centre. All of these stimulating social activities help with preventing social isolation and low mood and keeping minds and bodies active.

Every Tuesday and Thursday we offer specialised day care for people living with dementia or a memory impairment. Our staff are experienced in providing coping mechanisms for both clients and family needing support. Our day care services are available to clients paying privately, as well as those funded by the local authority. Clients can self-refer or be referred to us by social workers, the Memory Team, GPs, District Nurses, the Alzheimer's Team, or by family and friends.

Any potential clients can visit the centre for a look around and we offer a free trial day to all our clients. If you want more information about the day care services we can offer please contact Kerry or Vicki on 01952 820893.

NCCC is a charity and does not receive funding from the NHS. As a result, we regularly hold fundraising events to raise money for the day care centre including Quiz Nights, Live Music Nights, and a very popular Annual Plant Sale – this year on Saturday 13th May. We also hold a monthly lottery.

More information about our Events and Lottery can be found on our website [www.newport-care.org](http://www.newport-care.org) or phone 01952 820893. NCCC is also supported by the Newport League of Friends who run a charity shop at Baddeley Court, Newport – contact 820431 for more information.

## The Covid-19 Spring Booster

Those eligible for the booster include people aged 75 and over, and those with a weakened immune system, starting with residents in care homes. All other eligible patients can book by visiting the National Booking Service online, via the NHS App or by calling 119. Text messages and letters will also be sent to those without the app or not actively using it. The last spring vaccination appointments will be offered on 30 June.

There will be several sites right across the local area, including GPs, pharmacies, and community locations offering appointments, as well as the vaccination bus where no appointment is necessary.

More information of available sites and walk-in locations can be found at these websites, [National Booking](#), [NHS Grab-a-Jab](#), and [Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin NHS](#).

## SAND Matters

Safe Ageing No Discrimination (SAND) is a community organisation whose goal is to improve the experiences and increase the expectations of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) people as they age in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.

It formed in 2012, when a group of local people began discussing some of the issues which specifically affect LGBT+ people as they age; issues which are not typically recognised by the people who provide health, social care and other relevant support services in the county. SAND set about changing this - not to provide distinct LGBT+ services, but to influence existing service provision.

SAND is currently in the fourth year of a five-year project to encourage service providers across the county to 'EMBRACE A Culture of Inclusion'. These service providers do this by signing up to SAND's Covenant, which includes five pledges, such as providing the best possible service to older and old LGBT+

people, learning what life might have been like for older and old LGBT+ people, and vocally and visually supporting groups working with and for older and old LGBT+ people. Organisations which have signed up to SAND's Covenant include Age UK STW, Wrekin Housing Group, Energize, Cruse Bereavement Services, Coverage Care and many others.

This year, SAND is hoping to reach out to as many older and old LGBT+ people who live, work or play in the county to tell the story of the work it has been doing. To help with this, it has produced a 16-page booklet called SAND Matters. You can download it here (<https://bit.ly/sand-matters-forum>), or request a hard copy by emailing James ([james@lgbtsand.com](mailto:james@lgbtsand.com)) or call them on 01743 590023 and leave a message on their answerphone.

Perhaps you know someone who might benefit from learning about SAND's work? If you do, please spread the word by sharing this article and/or helping them to download or order the SAND Matters booklet.

If you would like to know more about SAND's work, visit [lgbtsand.com](http://lgbtsand.com), sign up to their monthly e-newsletter, or follow them on social media (@lgbtsand).

## Gratitude for the Spring

Dr Jane Graham

Well we are finally seeing some sunny days and even feeling some warmth from the sunshine now and I have to say we need it more than ever this year.

The energy crisis has impacted almost everyone and we have all become inventive, finding ways to keep warm – some of which are reminiscent of what my parents did in the years following the second world war.

As a child I grew up with my dad's old army coats on the bed on winter nights, hugging hot water bottles and wearing bed socks. Looking back I realise now that I was lucky to grow up in my generation, and in a family that didn't have much money, because learning how to manage on little and to appreciate small treats, is something that has stayed with me.

It has certainly stood me in good stead over this year's winter months, when we couldn't have anticipated to what extent we would all need to tighten our belts.

I think what it has helped me to consider, is how much we can take our lives for granted. Before this winter I would not have considered the level of my electricity use, I would not have seriously thought about wearing extra layers rather than turning the heating up, and I wouldn't have mulled over the trade-off between my electricity and gas use and the cost to the environment.

So, these newly emerging warmer days fill me with gratitude – in part because my house isn't as cold, but also because the spring is full of colour and confirms new growth and hope as we start to leave behind what has been a very grey and financially challenging winter.

We can hopefully all consider getting out more, sitting outside, and enjoying some sunshine on our faces as we head towards summer.

Have a wonderful spring and remember to consider each day, what you feel gratitude for in your life.

Dr Jane Graham is a Psychotherapist based in Telford. Contact via: [www.adhd-shropshire.co.uk](http://www.adhd-shropshire.co.uk)

## Healthwatch is your health and social care champion

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is your local health and social care champion. From Newport and Telford to Standford Bridge and Coalport and everywhere in between, we make sure NHS leaders, Social Care leaders and other decision makers involved in providing services to support your wellbeing, hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care and services.

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is your local health and social care champion. If you use GPs and hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, care homes or other support services in your area, we want to hear about your experiences.

We are independent and have the power to make sure service leaders and other decision makers involved in providing services listen to local feedback and improve standards of care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

It's really important that you share your experiences – whether good or bad, happy or sad. If you've had a negative experience, it's easy to think there's no point in complaining, and that 'nothing ever changes'. Or, if you've had a great experience, that you 'wish you could say thank you'. Remember, your feedback is helping to improve people's lives. So, if you need advice, or you're ready to tell your story – we're here to listen.

Whether you are in High Ercall, Tibberton, Cold Hatton Heath, Puleston, Edgmond, Kynnersley, Rodington, Bratton, Preston upon the Weald Moors, Muxton, Hadley, Wellington, Oakendales, Cluddley, Aston, Little Wenlock, Coalmoor, Doseley, Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge, Madeley, Lightmoor, Woodside, Dawley, Stirchley or many other places – wherever you are in fact - Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is here for you.

Share your story on 01952 739540, message us on [facebook.com/HealthwatchTW](https://www.facebook.com/HealthwatchTW), direct message us @HealthwatchT\_W, or email [info@healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.co.uk)

## Volunteering at Weston Park

Weston Park is just a few miles from Telford, on the border of Shropshire and Staffordshire. With its internationally acclaimed art collection, and a wealth of history, it is considered to be one of Britain's finest stately homes. It's also one of the friendliest, offering a warm welcome to visitors who come to see the property from the local area and also from all around the world.

The historic house, with its art gallery, park and gardens, is currently actively seeking new faces to join its enthusiastic and friendly team of volunteers. Volunteering at Weston gives the chance for those interested in history to discover the fascinating tales of the House, garden, estate and the people associated with it, and also to delve into the secrets of the home's hidden treasures, and see contemporary art in the Gallery.

It's also a great way of meeting like-minded people from a wide variety of backgrounds and in doing so volunteers are helping the independent charity, the Weston Park Foundation which has owned and cared for the estate since 1986.

Weston Park's volunteers have the opportunity of learning new skills and meeting people with similar interests, in addition to enjoying a range of benefits when they have attained a certain number of hours,

including discounts and free entry to the estate. A variety of interesting roles are available for potential volunteers. These include house guides, room stewards, and Rose Paterson Art Gallery assistants.

‘We are exceedingly grateful to our existing team of over a hundred volunteers’ says Gareth Williams, Weston Park’s Curator. ‘Their friendly enthusiasm and knowledgeable interest in the house, family and estate is infectious, as our visitors often comment. Passion, interest and commitment are the only qualifications we require. This provides an ideal opportunity for likeminded people to meet others and to develop their skills and interests’.

If you’re interested in having further information about joining Weston Park’s volunteering team then please contact Alison Poole, Gallery & Learning Coordinator: [alison.poole@weston-park.com](mailto:alison.poole@weston-park.com) or call 01952 852130.

Besides being open to the public throughout the summer season, Weston Park has also established itself as a venue for many iconic annual events whilst the estate is also visited by school children for curricular-based activities.

Originally built in 1671 for Elizabeth, Lady Wilbraham, and with large Victorian additions made for the 3rd Earl of Bradford, Weston Park houses internationally important treasures and collections of fine and decorative arts which attract interest from specialists and general visitors alike. Weston Park also has the Rose Paterson Art Gallery – open all year round – which has regularly changing exhibitions.

## Forum 50+ Volunteer Roles

### **Befrienders**

Could you spare a couple of hours a week to spend some time with someone who is lonely? You can offer your support either by telephone or in person, which can include home visiting and/or accompanied outings, eg a short walk, trip to the shops or cafe.

### **Helping at our regular social groups**

Could you offer a warm welcome to people who are nervous attending their first session, as well as helping with refreshments, and maybe organising activities?

Our volunteers range in age from 18 to 88. We offer flexible times, re-imbusement of travel costs, full guidance and support.

To find out more, call Chris on 07932 828333 or email [enquiries@forum50plus.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@forum50plus.org.uk)

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Why not give it a go?..

**Forum 50+ social groups**

Tea/coffee, chat, meet new friends.

Horsehay Village Hall, Mondays 10.30am - 12pm

Six Bells Madeley, Mondays 1.30pm - 3pm (Limited space, please enquire)

Sambrook Centre, Stirchley, 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month. 10.30am - 12pm

The Woolpack, Shawbirch, Tuesdays 1.30pm - 3pm, (Limited space, please enquire)

The Wheatsheaf, Shifnal, Wednesdays 11.15am - 12.45pm

Outpost Café at the Wakes, Oakengates, Wednesdays 1.30pm - 3pm

Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council, Thursdays 10.30am - 12pm

Highfield House, Hadley, Fortnightly Thursdays, 10.30am - 12pm

Call 07552 975676 or 07932 828333 for details.

**Musical Memories Dementia Café**

A friendly group for dementia patients and their families/carers to spend time together remembering and sharing their favourite music and songs.

Tuesdays 12.30—2.30pm

Meeting Point House, Southwater Square, TF3 4HS. Contact [reception@meetingpointhouse.co.uk](mailto:reception@meetingpointhouse.co.uk) or call 01952 292268 for more details

**Telford College Open Event**

Wed 24th May, 5pm to 7.30pm. Find out about short courses, full and part time courses for adults. Free hot meal to all attendees and competitions on the night. Everyone is welcome to join in and come have a look round.

Telford College, Haybridge Road, Wellington, TF1 2NP.

Book via [www.telfordcollege.ac.uk](http://www.telfordcollege.ac.uk) or just turn up on the day.

**Join the orchid counts at Lodge Field and at The Beeches**

Everyone and all ages are welcome to join in and no specialist botanical knowledge is required. It'll start on Lodge Field, Ironbridge Gorge, TF8 7QQ, at 10 am Sunday 25 June, then on to The Beeches close nearby to count the orchids on their fields, finishing by about 1 pm. You are welcome to come and join in at any time.

More details can be found at <https://bit.ly/3oMCwTX>  
<https://www.facebook.com/LodgeFieldIronbridge>

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