

## AGE UK WILTSHIRE

## News &amp; Views

**CEO Message - Providing Support, Encouraging Independence.**

Welcome to the sixth edition of our newsletter. Sarah Cardy, CEO, gives an update on our services.

I hope you all had a lovely summer and managed to find a bit of warmth. We are heading into the autumn now with new challenges and issues facing the people we support.

**New Government**

We have a new government, who have made some decisions which impact older people, such as the removing the universal Winter Fuel payment. I am sure you have read that the way for older people to qualify is to be in receipt of Pension Credit. We know that this is an under-claimed benefit, and people are often not aware they are eligible or need help to submit a claim. We have an important role to play in increasing awareness around this. We must also raise the question with Government and our local MPs about what resources will be available to help organisation like us to help people make claims. I am already asking this question of the newly elected MPs.

There are several other areas we would like to see addressed by a new Government, such as:

- Care closer to home and staffed by people who are well-trained and well-rewarded, and unpaid carers are respected and supported.
- An NHS that helps us age well, with investment into primary care and community, an preventative public health strategy that encourages and enables physical activity among older people, reduced waiting times, and better access to GP's. Many older people are raising issues around prescriptions.
- Recognition that a 'digital first' strategy can be excluding for many older people. Offline options need to be available for all public services. The Age UK Offline and Overlooked report gives a comprehensive summary.

Age UK has listened to the voices of many older people and has produced a clear outline of what needs to change in government policy. Details can be found [here](#).

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## CEO Welcome continued

### Our Devizes office is on the move

We are excited to share an important update with you. Due to our recent growth and the expansion of our services, Age UK Wiltshire Devizes Office has moved to a new location. This move will allow us to better accommodate all staff and volunteers in one place to provide improved collaborative working, allow us to expand our volunteer roles and improve our service for clients.

The new address from the 18th of September is:

**Units 9 and 10, Prince Maurice Court, Hambleton Avenue, Devizes, SN10 2RT**

All telephone numbers and emails will remain the same.

The office will be the base for some of our Information & Advice and Carers Together Wiltshire staff and volunteers as well as our Business Support team.

### New Charity Shop with Information Point coming soon in Devizes.

We are in the last stages of securing a lease for a new Charity Shop with Information Point in the centre of Devizes. There will be space to see people by appointment as well as lots of our useful information booklets. The shop will have many benefits, from promoting our services, providing new volunteering opportunities, recycling goods and providing affordable clothing. A real win win.

### Award for Quality services

I am delighted to say we have been awarded the Age UK Quality of Information Signposting Services Quality Marque for our Living Well, Melksham Community Support and Supportive Independence services. The teams provide an excellent service to older people, providing much needed information at a time of greatest need. Congratulations to those teams for all their hard work and for the wonderful support they provide to local older people.



We adhere to Age UK's Quality Standard for information and signposting.

## Organisation News and Updates.

### Charity Shops and Information Points

Our Charity Shops, with their Information & Advice points, continue to be well supported and offer a good range of clothes, bric-a-brac and other goods to high street shoppers in Salisbury, Bradford-on-Avon and Marlborough with our new Devizes shop opening later this year. As the seasons change you will notice our window displays featuring more autumnal scenes and a great range of warm coats, jumpers and other winterwear creeping onto the rails. If you or a loved one are need some help or advice, all our shops feature an Information & Advice point where you can find a selection of leaflets covering a whole range of subjects affecting older people, as well as referral forms that you can complete, hand to a member of our team and we can arrange for our I&A to contact you and provide you with the advice and guidance you need.

We couldn't survive without the generous donations we receive, so if you are having a clear out why not think about dropping your unwanted items off at one of our shops or requesting a collection via our website. Your preloved items mean we can continue to support older people, one donation at a time.



**“Supporting Older People, One Donation at a Time”**


## Organisation News and Updates: Information & Advice

We provide free, quality accredited information and advice to older people, their families and carers, on a wide range of issues affecting older people, including welfare benefits and money; arranging care and support; housing options; finding local services and later life planning.

We're delighted that our Southampton team has once again passed the Quality of Advice Assessment audit, maintaining the Advice Quality Standard certification.

We're also very pleased to have been successful in our application for a new Age UK programme, A Place to Call Home, supported by Skipton Building Society. This will enable us to increase our staff and volunteer team in Southampton and support more older people to stay safe and well at home.

We're keen to receive more applications for a £200 Wiltshire Local Energy Grant, thanks to Wiltshire Community Foundation, which is open to older people on a lower income and we still have grants available. More information on our website: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/our-services/energy-grants/>



“Absolutely wonderful – for a volunteer to spend 3hrs with me to help me was great – I can’t write well. You brought forward other issues that I didn’t think of and it’s given me a bit more confidence and I’m now using a walking stick! I’ve relaxed a lot. I’m happier because I’ve got the Attendance Allowance which will enable me to get out and about more and a cleaner! My husband was most impressed at how straightforward it was to organise help and we’ve been kept informed along the way.”

## Organisation News and Updates:

### Living Well service – working with GP surgeries


One of our flagship services is the Living Well service, a partnership between a Primary Care Network and Age UK Wiltshire. The service has been designed to give non-medical support to older patients (60+) through a holistic, collaborative approach with patients and multidisciplinary Primary Care teams, supporting people to live a healthy and fulfilling life and to live independently at home.

Two specialist Age UK Wiltshire staff work within GP surgeries in the north of Wiltshire, as part of a wider all-ages Living Well team. They provide holistic care and support to older patients who are at risk of unplanned hospital admissions and/or have frequent contact with primary, secondary or acute healthcare services.

People are referred by GPs for support with a range of issues, including:

- Health – falls, anxiety, confidence, eating/drinking
- Practical help – domestic, gardening, handy person
- Housing - options, equipment, repairs
- Personal care – washing, dressing, hairdresser
- Financial – benefit check, Attendance Allowance application
- Social support - activities, groups, befriending
- Health professional concern

The Living Well service reduces the amount of contact patients have with the surgery for non-medical concerns. One surgery we work with reviewed the number of consultations a patient received in the eight months prior to Living Well referral, compared to the eight months after first contact, and found that the number of surgery consultations reduced by 314% following the referral.



“Thank you so much for all you have done for me. You have really worked hard on getting my social life back to where I hoped it could be. I am so excited about all these new adventures I will be having.”



## Organisation News and Updates:

### Wellbeing Checks with Meals Updates

The Wellbeing Checks with Meals service continues to provide a hot nutritious meal to hundreds of older people throughout Wiltshire, Swindon, Bath and Northeast Somerset and South Gloucestershire, enabling many to stay in their own homes, helping to keep their independence. Every day 12 cars leave our kitchen in Swindon to deliver a hot meal during lunchtime and our drivers have holistic conversations to help ensure the wellbeing of their clients. Here are some stats from the year to date (1st April – 31st August):

- Over 28,000 meals delivered
- 358 people supported
- Over 100,000 miles driven



Later this year we will be replicating the service in Southampton from our Padwell Road kitchen, this will not only enable us to offer this valuable service and support to older people in Southampton but increase our reach to parts of the south of Wiltshire we have previously been unable to cover. We have already begun supplying meals to our day centre.

## Organisation News and Updates: Carers Together Wiltshire

The Carers Together Wiltshire team has been busy supporting carers since 1 April 2024, when we were commissioned by Wiltshire Council replacing the previous support agency. We provide tailored support to unpaid carers in Wiltshire to ensure that they can achieve a healthy balance between their caring responsibilities and their own interests and wellbeing. We provide the following types of support:

- Information, advice and guidance,
- Signposting or referring to other support services,
- Finding support in the local community,
- Carrying out carers assessments for anyone who identifies as an unpaid carer.



Throughout Autumn we will be hosting a number of Carers Roadshows across the county. The first one will take place on Monday 30 September in Tisbury. At the Carers Roadshow events unpaid carers will be able to find out about:

- The support provided by Carers Together Wiltshire for unpaid Carers
- Carers Assessments and how to access this help
- Our dedicated Parent Carers and Young Adult Carer services
- The new Carers ID card provided by Carer Friendly Wiltshire
- Digital support groups and online resources

Carers will also be given the opportunity to share their thoughts, and needs, around the type of community events they'd like to see in the local area for unpaid carers. The feedback will help shape how we continue to provide a carer friendly community in Wiltshire, and we are keen to hear the voices of all kinds of unpaid carers.

To find a Carers Roadshow near to you please go to our Facebook page and look at our events.

## Organisation News and Updates: Fitness & Friendship Clubs

Our Fitness & Friendship (F&F) Clubs are social clubs for older people with an emphasis on keeping active. Sessions include gentle exercises, games, quizzes, Tai Chi, with plenty of time for a friendly chat over refreshments.

We are delighted to have opened new Fitness & Friendship Clubs at:

Toothill, Swindon – this club is free to attend

Westbury, Wiltshire

Tidworth, Wiltshire

Please head over to <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/activities-and-events/fitness-and-friendship/> to find out more.



**Picture: Calne group Olympics**

Every year the F&F clubs complete a Club Cup Challenge - this year's theme was the Olympics. The idea of the challenge is to inspire movement and enjoyment of exercise while working as a team for a common goal - F&F Club glory! Club members have videoed their endeavours, and a team of judges will soon be reviewing these and awarding the Cup.



## Organisation News and Updates: Fitness & Friendship Clubs

This year's Wellbeing Scorecard survey has been completed. This measures various wellbeing scores, either against someone's previous year's score or, if they joined within the last year, the score when they started attending F&F. The survey found average wellbeing scores had increased across the board, with people reporting increases in the amount they can walk/exercise; confidence to participate; connectedness; independence; resilience and general wellbeing.

**"I feel that the F&F exercise sessions are helping with my husband's co-ordination which is a benefit as he has Parkinson's. F&F club is excellent and just what he wanted with the right mix of exercise and time to chat and socialise."**




## Organisation News and Updates: Padwell day centre

The Padwell Road Day Centre members have enjoyed a busy and entertaining summer. Without the centre many of our members would be lonely and isolated. People attending enjoy activities like singing and dancing, bingo and board games. One of our volunteers is a keen local historian and gives engaging talks on historical events which the members enjoy. The centre has entertainers twice a month, which everyone really looks forward to. Children from a local primary school will start coming in again in October, and we really enjoy their company.

The day centre is funded through a combination of private payers and those who receive a direct payment from social services. We currently have 21 members, who attend various sessions across 4 days. Our busiest days are Tuesdays and Thursdays. People say they like the range of activities and the location, as it's easily accessible for most people.

We have some members who make their own way to us, one of whom only lives a few doors down from the day centre and she enjoys the brief walk. However, staff and members were thrilled when we purchased a wheelchair accessible vehicle. The new vehicle is used to collect members in the morning and then drop them off at home again later in the day. This adds another dimension to the day as people enjoy the ride and have a chance to look forward to the rest of the day.

The new vehicle allows us to get out and about. We stay local usually, sometimes to the garden centre which everyone enjoys, especially at this time of year where they have lunch in the restaurant. We would like to expand the service so we are looking for a part-time driver or drivers, so if you know of anyone who'd like to give up a few hours per week please let us know.



**"It's really good here, I'm very happy. I didn't realise people could be so nice."**


## Organisation News and Updates: Supportive independence, Swindon

Age is recognised as one of the key risk factors for falls, with around a third of people aged 65 and over (plenty of them in good health and not frail), and around half of people aged 80 and over, falling at least once a year (PHE, 2017).

The Supportive Independence service supports people to remain independent in their homes and empowers them to take charge of their health, wellbeing and independence, helping them to become less likely to fall. We help people to get more connected and increase their activity, at home and in their communities. Where there are barriers to getting out and about (transport, confidence, money, information about what's going on in the local community) we work hard to reduce or remove these. We use various resources, including the Steady on your Feet tool, to check whether there are other factors which increase someone's risk of falling, for example medication, footwear, hearing (imbalance), low / high blood pressure, and check how safe the home environment is.

Fitness & Friendship Clubs are a key part of the project, promoting balance, strength, and social interaction. We've set up two new clubs, in Penhill and Toothill, which are free to attend, and we can help with transport.

We are receiving amazing feedback from the community and from the over 60 clients we have supported since we started the project.



**"I wanted to say thank you for all your help. I'm really grateful for everything you've done to support me, especially with my housing and my mental and physical health. Your assistance has been invaluable following the breakdown of my relationship with my wife."**

## Organisation News and Updates: Wellbeing/ Telephone Befriending Service

Our team of Telephone Befrienders call around 80 people for a weekly catch-up, offering companionship, laughter and support. The service remains closed to external referrals but we hope to recruit and train more volunteer Befrienders soon.

Some people prefer not to have a weekly call but to have a service they can call when they're feeling lonely. The Age UK Silver Line service, founded by Dame Esther Rantzen, is available 24/7 on 0800 4 70 80 90.

Our Wellbeing volunteers provide tailored support to people, helping them to get out and about or to resolve issues at home which are affecting their quality of life. Recent support includes taking bus journeys with someone who didn't feel confident to do this on their own; walking into town together; and providing companionship to someone whose wife had recently moved into a care home.

**"The calls are amazing and I always look forward to them, although I've never met her I feel like I've got to know her and I enjoy the updates about her dogs and garden!"**



## Organisation News and Updates: Melksham Community Support Service

The Melksham Community Support service is funded by Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council, to improve the wellbeing of older people living in the area, by offering support, access to information and practical help.

MCS was recently featured in the [Melksham News](#).

**“I have moved pharmacies and they are delivering my prescriptions to me for free. This is good! I have been awarded the higher rate of Attendance Allowance. And it was backdated. I didn't know I was entitled to anything.”**

**“Many thanks for helping me. I would be stuck if you hadn't come to see me. It gives me peace of mind knowing you are there and I can call on you.”**



## Organisation News and Updates: Royal Wootton Bassett

Age UK Wiltshire was approached by Age Concern in Royal Wootton Bassett to ask if we would be willing to take over the services they were running to support older people in the area. We decided the first service to get up and running again would be the Monday Club.



An Open Day was held on 3rd June to ask local people what they wanted from the Club, was Monday the best day and did they like the current venue. Following on from this meeting and having listened to all comments and suggestions Age UK Wiltshire opened the Royal Wootton Bassett Monday Friendship club later that month. Tracey de Wit is leading the club with the invaluable help of volunteers who have been recruited for the club, Vicky and Christine, and Dan, who also volunteers with the local Fitness & Friendship Club. The guests mostly wanted to keep to the present club format which we have done, but we are also introducing other activities to support them. A weekly game of Bingo takes place followed by a Bonus Ball game, card games and a raffle. Each week there is a quiz for the guests to work on in teams. In future weeks we hope to have a variety of speakers and some additional entertainment.

## Organisation News and Updates:

### Meet the trustee

Working hard behind the scenes are our amazing Trustee Board who provide a strategic lead and oversight for the direction of Age UK Wiltshire.

Please meet trustee, Warren Finney.

#### 1. Why did you decide to become a trustee of Age UK Wiltshire?

Over the years, I've been lucky to be a trustee on several charity boards. Age UK Wiltshire really appealed to me because of the impact it has on the lives of the older community. In a society today, where families often live all over the country, even the world, ensuring there is support for older people is more important than ever.

#### 2. What difference do you feel the charity is making?

Age UK Wiltshire provides some of the best support around, helping to keep people living independently in their own homes, reducing isolation, keeping people active and helping with financial poverty.

#### 3. What are you most excited about for the charity?

I think it's the expansion journey we're on at the moment and how this will result in the amazing care and support provided by AUKW reaching potentially huge numbers of people, and how we can make a positive impact on their lives as they grow older.

#### 4. Outside of your role with our charity, what do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I love photography, so taking photographs and creating a photography website is great fun. We love travelling in our campervan, escaping to new places whenever we can, usually with a good book in tow and hunting for a great bit of coast and some nice food.

#### 5. What book, film, or song has had a significant impact on you and why?

Probably Don McCullin's *Unreasonable Behaviour*, which is an autobiography about his life as a journalist covering conflicts around the world. His photographs are breathtaking. Along the same lines I'd say John Heartfield's art posters. He was an artist who shifted from the dada movement to become one of the greatest anti-war artists/propaganda protagonists during the Second World War. Their ability to create so powerful messages through imagery really inspired me.



## Join our team

Age UK Wiltshire is a local independent charity with around 60 members of staff, mostly part-time. We help over 1500 local older people every year, offering activities, events, social contact and information. It's a great place to work if you really want to make a difference in people's lives.

Our website is regularly updated with all of our latest vacancies.

You can find out more [here](#)



## Volunteer with Age UK Wiltshire

We rely on volunteers to support the services we deliver. We welcome applications and support from all parts of the community and will work with people so they get the best experience possible from working with us.

Our services are carefully designed to promote independence, wellbeing, and personal choice, helping individuals thrive in later life.

We have a wide variety of volunteer roles available to explore. Find out more [here](#).



Visit our website for more information about our services

[www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk](http://www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk)

[www.ageuk.org.uk/southampton/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/southampton/)



## Voice It, Hear It

We are part of a partnership that is about engagement and consultation with Wiltshire Council and we are trying to build a network of voices, please see below if you want to become a Health Research Champion.

**Join us as a  
Health Research  
Champion!**



**Help shape the future of  
health research**

Are you part of the global majority or a person with a disability? Your voice matters in health research! We believe that health research should include everyone, so all people have a chance to join and benefit.

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