

Newsletter Summer 2023



Alastair McPherson with MSOPC Chairman Barbara Baldwin on St. Patrick's Day

'Warm Lunches' Grande Finale!

Hello everyone.

Time seems to be rushing by this year, but then I think when you're busy that's always the way, never enough hours in the day. On Friday 17th March, St Patrick's Day. MSOPC came to the end of its project **"Step into the Warmth with MSOPC"**. We commenced the Project at the beginning of the New Year, although we started the planning of it many months prior to that, as the cost of living soared and especially

MSOPC would like to thank the Sussex Community Foundation for funding all of our newsletters this year.



MSOPC is a local charity set up in 2004, run by older people for older people in Mid Sussex.

Our aim is to improve their lives through the representations we make to decision-makers about older people's needs. We also aim to reduce isolation and loneliness, offering support, advice and information on many issues which older people face, through our social opportunities, public events, roadshows, quarterly newsletters, website and helpline.

There is no charge to join MSOPC, either as an individual or as an organisation working with older people, and your information will not be passed on to third parties. To find out more information, please phone 01444 242 760. Further details of MSOPC and upcoming events can be found on our website at www.msopc.org.uk or Facebook page www.facebook.com/msopc.org.uk

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—→ the cost of fuel, there was a general effort by local authorities and others to open up warm spaces, mostly public spaces, that people could go to during the cold winter months to keep warm. But the MSOPC team felt how much nicer it would be if we could take that warm space to people and bring everyone together socially and enjoy a meal with others in a warm and friendly atmosphere. Also invite people along to give as much information as possible of where people could get help if they or a loved one needed it, especially during these cold months.

Our thanks to all the speakers from the Citizens Advice, Doctors Prescribers, and Liam, who gave people valuable information about the cost of their Broadband, land lines, and mobiles and where and how to get the best deals, as well as warning folks to be aware of the ever increasing scams.

Finding the right venues has been challenging, especially in Burgess Hill, the demolition of the Martlets Hall, and no suitable alternative has created many problems for lots of small organisations, and also the closure of Clair Hall in Haywards Heath, which of course is still being used by the NHS, *but I'm sure we have all welcomed the volunteers and doctors there who have been instrumental in giving us all our Covid and flu jabs. Our sincere thanks to them all.* But not deterred by these obstacles, MSOPC managed to successfully run our project across Mid Sussex from 13th January to 17th March. In Haywards Heath, Lindfield, East Grinstead and Burgess Hill. Altogether we held seven events. The last one being an afternoon tea, with entertainment, at the Ashenground Community Hall, Haywards Heath. It was a great day, and as always, the MSOPC team did us proud. Our thanks to the volunteers without whom we couldn't have done what we did. Clare our entertainer for stepping in at short notice. Those yummy cakes, they gave us all the energy we needed to get moving and even dancing to Elvis songs and doing the twist. It was good to see the Haywards Heath Deputy Mayor, Alastair McPherson there, who also seemed to have enjoyed the afternoon. Check out our forthcoming events on the opposite page.

Our thanks to you all for your continuing support.

Barbara

Clair Hall Developments

As well as holding get-togethers and sending out newsletters, MSOPC was set up to be a voice to local authorities on behalf of older people. We attend many council and other official meetings in Mid Sussex to follow what is going on and voice our concerns as needed, if we think older people have not been taken into account, or may be negatively affected by decisions which are being made. We will instigate / join protests and make a big fuss if we feel that is the only way to protect the rights and local amenities for older people! We have been closely following and been actively involved in the proceedings with Clair Hall, and member Mike Bright has written a report about the latest council meeting which we attended:-

The question was asked at the meeting which was attended also by Mid Sussex District councillors. "Is the Town Council supporting any initiatives to bring Clair Hall back to allowing the hall to be used for Arts and Cultural activities, and is there a time scale?" One of the Mid Sussex District Councillors responded that MSDC is in the process of identifying possible investors to bring the Hall back into community use as it had been closed because it had been financially unviable. This was refuted by one of the attendees at the meeting as the Council had received a letter from the Theatres dated 11th September 2020. This shows that the previous year there had been a footfall of 55,000 and at the time of closure the cancellation of 40 major shows/bookings for the year rendered the calculations for closure incorrect.

The Theatres Trust at that time also warned the Mid Sussex Council against the closure as the Arts Council had reported an under provision of Arts and Culture venues in Mid Sussex. However the permanent closure decision was made in spite of this.

One attendee also made a plea for Clair Hall to be reinstated as soon as possible as now the Martlets Hall Burgess Hill Arts and Culture venue had been demolished by the Mid Sussex Council the under provision of Arts and Culture venues in Mid Sussex was even more serious than the Arts Council had previously identified.

The Chairman of the Town Council meeting brought the discussion to a close stating this was an MSDC Council matter and the Town Council were not the decision makers.

Mike

Upcoming MSOPC events!

Unfortunately Tania Rodd, who regularly sings at our events and was due to sing at many more this year, has had to cancel due to ill health. We wish her a speedy recovery and hope to see her singing again soon!

King Charles III Coronation afternoon tea

Tuesday 9th May, 2-4pm, King Edward Hall, Lindfield, with singer Clair Jarvis

FULLY BOOKED. The person who booked your place should have received your tickets in the envelope with their newsletter. Please make sure to bring them on the day. We have permission to use the car park round the corner at the Evangelical Church on Chaloner Road (limited spaces). *(Bus 30 leaves Haywards Heath South Rd 13:17, arrives Lindfield High Street 13:30. Return bus 270 leaves 16:00 arrives South Rd 16:13. Bus 270 leaves East Grinstead Station 13:05 arrives Lindfield High Street 13:48. Return bus 270 leaves at 16:42, arrives EG Station 17:24)*

Burgess Hill Festival event

Thursday 22nd June, 10.30-2pm, St. Wilfrid's Church Hall, Station Road, Burgess Hill.

We will have activities and local clubs for you to come along and try, and singer Leila Tasher. Light lunch and refreshments provided, please book on our answerphone.

Afternoon tea for the housebound

We will be working with local organisations to provide an event for those who are normally confined to their homes for whatever reason, with transport and befriending services provided, in August. We will be giving local care providers the details nearer the time.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Tuesday 26th September, 10-12pm, Lindfield Evangelical Church Hall, 1 Chaloner Close, RH16 2NH. Come and have coffee and cake in exchange for a donation to Macmillan. No need to book.

Silver Sunday Coffee Morning

Thursday 5th October 10-12pm, Orchard's Shopping Centre, Haywards Heath. Come and have coffee and cake al fresco and enjoy some singing (under the marquee)! Drop in.

If you would like to come to any of our events that require you to book, please leave the full names and numbers of each person you are booking for on our answerphone 01444 242760. We won't phone everyone back to confirm, but we will book your place. We are a friendly bunch and encourage people to feel brave enough to also come on their own and meet some new faces!

Can you Help Us?

We love to put on events and bring everybody together. The main way we are funded is through grants from local councils, trusts and foundations which require evidence that the money they give us will be used to help the people we say we will use it for. If you have been helped in any way by our events or newsletters, have learnt something useful or if it's helped relieve loneliness, please do send us an email or note it down so that we can show potential funders what their money will do.

We are also looking for volunteers! All of the above events require tables and chairs to be put out in advance, and the committee are in their 70's and 80's and find it difficult. If you can help with this task ahead of any of the above events, or know someone that might be willing, please leave a message on our answerphone 01444 242760.

We would also love to hear from anyone who would like to help at our events or join the committee, which meets on the first Monday of the month in Lindfield. Please contact us if you are interested.

Photo Gallery

St. Patrick's Day Celebrations 17th March

This was the 'grande finale' of our series of 'step into the warmth' lunches, at Ashenground Community Centre. We got our green tablecloths out for some afternoon tea and singer Clair Jarvis came along to entertain us with some Irish tunes amongst her repertoire, and got us up dancing. Deputy Mayor Alastair McPherson joined us and we all had a fabulous time. Kindly funded by Haywards Heath Town Council.



Annual Public Meeting 18th April

We were very lucky to have Adrian Barrott from the Sussex Community Foundation (who are very kindly funding all our newsletters this year) to open our event for us. This is our main event of the year, to tell you how we at MSOPC are getting on. We also had deputy mayor Janice Henwood in attendance and speakers from 'Lasting Power of Attorney Made Simple' and West Sussex Fire and Rescue to tell us about their home safety checks amongst other ways to keep safe. Information stands included Carers Support, Tapestry Day Club, Age UK, SSAFA, HILS (meals on wheels), U3A, Home and Company, Neighbourly Care, local artist Jane Reid, and each said a few words about how they can help. Lunch and refreshments were enjoyed by all, and all the volunteers worked tirelessly to serve everyone. Special thanks to Dianne for providing wonderful cakes again. We have had some wonderful feedback from you all, saying how much you learnt and that you enjoyed it.



Adrian Barrott told us afterwards "It really was a very enjoyable event and a perfect example of the impact which your organisation achieves (and not just in Burgess Hill, but so widely across Mid Sussex) – and demonstrates so well the value of the grants which we have awarded MSOPC. As I mentioned when I spoke, one of the best aspects of my job is seeing what the grants deliver, and meeting those in organisations (including the volunteers) and the communities and individuals they support. Not only did you provide a wonderful social occasion for a large number of members (with delicious food, in a very comfortable and accessible warm space), but the added value of the charities you brought in to talk about what they can offer your members, and the addresses from the keynote speakers was considerable." Thank you to Adrian and to everyone who came and supported the event.

Free Coronation Celebrations across Mid Sussex



East Grinstead

On Saturday 6th May at 9am, **East Grinstead Town Council** are organising a fancy dress 'Monarchy through the Ages' community walking parade. The parade will start at East Court, College Lane, RH19 3LT, and will process through town to King George's field, Moat Road RH19 3LH. At King George's field there will be a large screen so everyone can watch the Coronation ceremony together. There will be free children's entertainment including a bouncy castle and mini golf, sponsored by Step by Step School. Later in the day there will be a 'right royal dog show.' Bring a picnic or enjoy food from the food vendors. 9-4pm.

On Friday 5 May 2.30-4.00pm, join **East Grinstead Library** in celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III with a trip down memory lane. They'll share memories about the Royal Family and our local area using their reminiscence materials whilst enjoying tea and cake! This is a free event but spaces are limited. Please contact East Grinstead Library on 01342 332900 for more details and to book your space.

Haywards Heath

On Sunday 7th May, **Haywards Heath town council** will be having their coronation celebrations in Victoria Park, 120 South Road, Haywards Heath RH16 4LR from 12pm to 5pm, including a 'Royal Procession' from the Town Hall, 40 Boltro Road to Victoria Park at 11.30am. Celebrate The Coronation Big Lunch! - Either bring your own Picnic, or purchase food from one of the food stalls available!

Burgess Hill

Burgess Hill Town Council Big Coronation Lunch, St. John's Park, Lower Church Road, RH15 9AA on Sunday May 7th 12-4pm. There will be live musical performances throughout the day, coordinated by Mid Sussex Star, and people can purchase food from one of the area's community groups, including Burgess Hill Bonfire Society, Burgess Hill 7th Scouts and St John's Church.

Hassocks

Hassocks Oldland Windmill 'Coronation celebration' event on May 7th, 11-4pm, where a complimentary minibus will be available from the Thatched Inn at the end of Grand Avenue, BN6 8DH every 20 minutes (no parking at the mill). There will be folk singers, puppet shows, tours of the mill, flour sales, a barbeque and other refreshment stalls. Suggested donation £5.

Cuckfield

Whiteman's Green, RH17 5HX on Sunday 7th May 2-7pm. Live music from Band of Dads, bouncy castles, slides, teacup rides and circus skills will be free, as well as food stalls and the return of last year's very popular beer festival! There will also be a skate jam taking place, so bring along your gear to take part and receive hints and tips to improve your skills. Free entry, bring your own picnic! Extremely limited parking so please try and walk to the event. Option to drop off items.

Crawley Down

Sunday, 7 May 2023, 11-5pm, Coronation Festival of Family Fun, Food and Drink. The Haven Centre, Hophurst Lane, RH10 4LJ. Many and various food and drink stalls to visit and try, music, fairground rides, etc.

Scaynes Hill

Sunday 7th May, St Augustine's Church, Church Road, RH17 7NY, 12-2.30. Finger Buffet Big Lunch. All welcome.

Poynings

Sunday 7th May 2pm til late, Poynings Village Hall. Childrens races, live music, competitions, bouncy castle, bring your own picnic.



Damp and Mould In social housing

Awaab Ishak died aged 2 in December 2020 after prolonged exposure to mould in his social home, which his landlord failed to resolve. Following the Awaab's Law campaign, on 6th of March, Housing Secretary Michael Gove launched the government's 'Make it Right' advertising campaign, with social housing tenants being encouraged to make a complaint to their landlord if there is a problem.

If you are a social housing tenant and suffer from damp or other problems in your property then you should contact your landlord to advise them of the problem. Social housing landlords are now given time limits to investigate and fix damp and mould under Awaab's Law, along with social housing managers needing qualifications to ensure residents receive a quality service. If the problem is not fixed by your landlord, you can contact the housing standards team on 01444 477292. Mid Sussex District Council has the power to deal with properties that don't comply with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

Last year the government brought in a new law to make it easier for social housing residents to access the Housing Ombudsman if they are still unhappy with their landlord's final response to their complaint. Previously, residents had to contact an MP, local councillor or designated Tenant Panel before raising an issue with the Ombudsman. Otherwise they had to wait 8 weeks if they had exhausted all their options available through their landlord's complaints process before it was sent to the Ombudsman.

Mould and damp are caused by excess moisture. Moisture in buildings can be caused by leaking pipes, rising damp in basements or ground floors, or rain seeping in because of damage to the roof or around window frames. For not much money, you can buy a small hygrometer from DIY or hardware shops (or online), which measures the amount of humidity in your home (they also tell you the room temperature too, which is a bonus!). Humidity in your home should ideally be between 30-60% and not more than 70%.

In many houses, condensation is the most common cause of mould. You will get less mould if you keep your home warm, ventilate properly and minimise the amount of moisture you release into the air. The excess moisture in the air could be due to drying washing indoors, or showering or cooking without extraction or ventilation. Cooking without a lid on and boiling your kettle can release up to 6 pints of water vapour into the air in your home in a day. Keep lids on pans, open windows when cooking or use extractor fans. Taking a bath or shower can release up to 2 pints of water, but 90% less if you fill the bath with cold water first. Simply breathing over the course of a day can release up to 1.5 pints of water into the air! But the big one is drying clothes—drying washing indoors can release up to 9 pints of water into the air in a day, so it is important to dry washing outdoors if you can, or in the bathroom with the door closed and window open. Slightly open 2 windows on opposite sides of the house / flat for 30 minutes a day to allow drier air to circulate through your home, and dry your windows and window sills every morning. It may be worth investing in a dehumidifier if you are unable to ventilate your home adequately.

Talking of laundry, have you tried using laundry washing sheets as an alternative to heavy, bulky liquid or powder? If you struggle with the weight of these, this could be a good alternative for you. Each sheet is made of concentrated laundry detergent, so they are very light. You just put a sheet in with your washing and it will dissolve in hot or cold water. They work just as well, if not better than liquids or powders, and the bonus is they are better for the planet as it means less bottles being used. There are many brands that make these, and a small selection is available in supermarkets, which hopefully will increase.



In other news, all the local buses are extending their reduced price single fares of £2 until 30th June, which is handy if you need to catch a bus before 9.30am, or don't have a bus pass.

According to WSCC, the green light has been given for a £17.4million boost for bus service improvements in West Sussex to increase passenger numbers and support the local economy. A range of schemes will now be developed, including the introduction of 'Tap On – Tap Off' fare technology across buses operating within the county, installation of 300 new Real Time Passenger Information displays at countywide locations, providing electronic display screens, which are popular with both passengers and bus operators, improved bus stops at countywide sites, with new poles, flags, hardstanding, disabled access, shelters, seating, lighting and nearby crossing points, improvements to the bus lanes in Station Way, Crawley and the bus lane priority set up in Manor Royal, Crawley, and the creation of a new transport hub in Crawley, providing a single place to swap between different modes of public transport.

Nicola

Check Your Council Tax Band

If there has ever been a change in your property's size or internal structure, it's possible that your council tax band is wrong, and you could be paying more than your next door neighbour in the same size house! It's worth checking to see if it is correct. You can check online at www.gov.uk/council-tax-bands by entering your postcode, or you can phone the Valuation Office Agency on 03000 501 501.

Could You Receive Pension Credit?

Have you checked whether you are eligible to receive pension credit? You need to be over state pension age, with or without a partner. You or your partner (who lives with you) must be receiving housing benefit for people over state pension age. Pension Credit tops up your weekly income to £201.05 if you are single, or £306.85 joint weekly income if you have a partner. You are eligible even if you own your own home or have savings (the amount of savings could affect how much you get). For more information, go to www.gov.uk/pension-credit/eligibility or phone the Pension Credit claim line on 0800 99 1234, textphone 0800 169 0133, Relay UK (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone) 18001 then 0800 99 1234

A bonus is that anyone who is in receipt of Pension credit or Universal credit can visit Wakehurst for £1, either prebook online or pay on the gate. The Metrobus goes right into the car park. More about places to go in East Grinstead on the back page of the newsletter.

Linda

Reducing Your Phone Costs

With Landline, Broadband and Mobile costs all rising between 10% and 20%, can you do anything to reduce your bills? **These are some of the deals that are currently available online.**

Broadband

- Shell Energy Fast Broadband. 11mbps, 18 month contract. £19 per month, plus 1 month free & £50 Amazon Vouchers (must be claimed). No calls included.
- Now Brilliant Broadband. 11mbps 12 month contract, £18/m + £50 one off delivery. (With a £60 installation fee you can get a 1 month rolling contract)
- Plusnet Unlimited Broadband. 11mbps, 18 month contract, £24/m. (Excellent customer service).

Mobile. All of these give you unlimited calls & text on a one month rolling contract.

- Libara (Vodafone). 3GB data, £4.90pm, 99p pm for the 1st 6 months
 - Smarty (Three). 4GB data, £5pm
 - GiffGaff (O2), 2GB, £6pm
 - Plusnet (EE), 5GB, £8pm
 - Lyca (O2), 3GB, £4.75pm, 1p pm for the 1st 6 months. Very little customer feedback so far.
 - Asda. no-data, £4pm. Great for unlimited calls and text.
- 1pmobile.com (EE) PAYG SIM charging 1p per minute and 1p per text, 1p per MB data.

If you want more detail, there are some great online articles produced by the folk down at the Spire Computer Help that give you more information. Or Pop into the Spire Computer Help behind St John's Burgess Hill on a Thursday between 10am and 1pm and they will be delighted to help.

Mobile : spirecomputerhelp.wordpress.com/2023/02/15/mobile-costs/

Landline & Broadband : spirecomputerhelp.wordpress.com/2023/02/15/landline-and-broadband-costs/

Liam

Join MSOPC! Its free to join and we won't share your details.

Name _____ Receive by Post ☐ E-mail ☐

Address _____

Post code _____ Telephone (including area code) _____

E-mail _____ Signed _____ Date _____

Covid Spring Boosters

People aged 75 or above, or those with a weakened immune system, can now book their spring COVID-19 vaccine. Book at www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination/ through the NHS App, or call 119.

When capacity allows, they can also take eligible walk-in patients - if no spare capacity, they will help book you in to a future session. They always have the current week's schedule showing on the front glass doors of Clair Hall. This can be seen whether they are open or not.

Contact us

If you would like to get in touch with us about anything, please phone our answerphone on **01444 242760** with a clear message and we will phone you back.

Or you can write to us at 93 Barnmead, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1XB

Please do have a look at our Facebook page www.facebook.com/msopc.org.uk and website www.msopc.org.uk.

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Local Free Groups

East Grinstead

Trinity Methodist Church, on the corner of Lingfield Road and London Road, Knit and Natter 3rd Saturday of each month 10am-12pm, bring your own crafts to do.

East Grinstead Library, Mondays 10-12pm Relax with Colouring, Tuesdays 10-12pm Board Games, Saturday 2-4pm Knit and Natter

Lindfield

All Saints Church Tiger@Ten group, High St, Lindfield, Haywards Heath RH16 2HS every other Tuesday 10-12pm. Phone 01444 482405.

Lindfield Evangelical Free Church, Chaloner Road, RH16 2NQ, occasional Saturday Coffee Mornings 10.30-12pm, phone 01444 483576

Burgess Hill

Mustard Seed Café, St Edward the Confessor, Royal George Road, RH15 9TD, Thursday, Friday and Saturday 9-4pm. Amazing value

Burgess Hill Library, Thursdays 10-12pm Knit and Natter,

Haywards Heath

Haywards Heath Library, Mondays 2-4pm Board Games, Tuesday 2-3pm Knit and Natter, Wednesdays, 10.30-11.30 Reading Friends

All library groups are on a drop in basis but its worth phoning the library to confirm that the group is on before you go.

Voter ID

The UK Government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station at some elections. This new requirement will apply for the first time in England at the local elections on Thursday 4 May 2023.

Which forms of ID can I use to vote?

You can use any of the following:

- Passport
- Driving licence (including provisional license)
- Blue badge
- Certain concessionary travel cards
- Identity card with PASS mark
- Biometric Immigration document
- Defence identity card
- Certain national identity cards

For more information on which forms of photo ID will be accepted, visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID or call their helpline 0800 328 0280