



MSOPC Chairman Barbara Baldwin and Vice Chair Val Upton with Pastor Mervyn

Have a savvy Christmas!

As the shorter days and longer nights are now upon us, and a definite chill in the air, we start once again wondering when to put the heating on.

My advice is, for the sake of your health put the heat on when you need to. If you are finding it difficult financially, then please do ring your electricity and gas supplier and talk to them. They are duty bound to help you. What you mustn't do, is sit in one place for long periods of time with a blanket round you. You must keep warm and moving. —→

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, quarterly newsletters, website and helpline.

It is free to join MSOPC

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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——> But I think we have all felt a chill in our bank balances this past year. I cannot ever remember prices increasing as fast, and by as much as they have this year. Things have not been made any easier with the Government freezing the tax allowances for everyone, yet again. Which meant that the so-called increases in Pensions was not an increase at all for lots of people. We are told that the cost of living is allegedly coming down, but that doesn't mean the prices are coming down, it just means they are not going up as fast as they were.

But with the festive season just around the corner and the looming of presents to buy. I think a lot of us will be cutting down on how much we spend this year. But when members of your family say what would you like for Christmas have a think about it. In fact, try and think about what you really would like before you're asked. I like to paint, so last year when I was asked the question. I said some tubes of paint would be nice. I got them, and I was delighted. And I managed to clear the bathroom cupboard of most of those boxes of bits of shower gel and creams, that had been gathering. So, if you knit or crochet and would like some particular wools or crafting items say, "well actually I could do with", whatever it is you know you will use it, and get pleasure from it.

One thing we should all be looking at is trying not to buy too much food this Christmas. So much of it lands up in the bin. So, try and be a little bit smarter and freeze what you can, often small bits of leftover ham and turkey etc., can be made into delicious dishes at very little cost. I often make sauces that I can use with Pasta, divide into portions and freeze. Others can be used in other dishes such as Casseroles and even Cottage pie. Just right on a cold winter day.

But whatever you do and wherever you spend Christmas I hope it will be a happy and joyful one for you all. But however we feel, when the tree goes up and the lights go on that lifts the spirits. Keep Warm and I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and see you again in 2024.

Barbara

East Grinstead Information

Our resident East Grinstead expert, Linda Vickers, gives us an insight into what is going on in the area;

Pop-up community brunch, first Saturday of the month, next dates 2nd December, 6th January, 9.30-12.30, Dormansland Baptist Church, 7 High Street, Dormansland RH7 6PU. 07551 493418. Everyone is welcome.

Age UK East Grinstead

Annual membership £33 some activities reduced cost New café open to all, Mon—Fri 10-2pm. Tea, coffee, cake, or lunch including jacket potatoes, paninis, omelettes, sandwiches. Age UK Glen Vue Activity Centre, Railway Approach, East Grinstead RH19 1BS. Tel 01342 327046

Short Mat Bowls, Monday afternoons, 2-4pm, Jubilee Community Centre, Charlwood Road, East Grinstead RH19 2HL. Phone Claire 01342 328334

Saturday Coffee Shop Sat 10-12 tea/coffee 60p Bacon Sandwich £1.50, Tea cake with butter 80p St Swithun's Church 47 High Street, East Grinstead RH19 3AS

Welcome Cafe Mondays 10-3 tea/coffee cake, Tue & Wed 12-3 soup and sandwich, Fri 10-4 morning coffee lunchtime and afternoon. Adult Knit & Natter 3rd Sat of the month 10-12pm, Trinity Methodist Church, Lingfield Road, East Grinstead RH19 2HA, 01342 302862

For more information, East Grinstead Town Council's Community and Tourism desk in the library has a wealth of local information available from help organisations, community groups and sports activities to local coach trips. They can be contacted on 01342 410121 or communityandtourism@eastgrinstead.gov.uk

Correction from Autumn newsletter

CARE East Grinstead and Lingfield provides transport for medical appointments at surgeries and hospitals based locally and in the surrounding areas. Donations requested but not obligatory. 01342 410086.

They do not provide a helping hand and friendly ear (apart from when transporting to appointments!), shopping, or to visit friends as stated in our Autumn newsletter.

Upcoming MSOPC events!

We do not charge for any of our events

MSOPC Christmas Party

FULLY BOOKED!

Our Christmas tea in December is fully booked, and if you booked via our answerphone, you should have received your tickets in with your newsletter (or posted separately if you get our newsletter by e-mail). All the details are on the ticket, please bring it with you to the event. Doors open at 1.45pm.

We have got permission for you to use the car park at the Evangelical Church around the corner on Chaloner Road, although it does fill up quickly.



Christmas Raffle

We will be holding a raffle at the Christmas Tea, and have some very nice prizes to give away, including our star prizes:



- **A meal for 2 at the Stand Up Inn, Lindfield****
- **A £50 voucher for Corner Hairdressing, Lindfield****
- **A reflexology treatment at O'Reiki Therapies, Cuckfield****
- **Wine Tasting for 2 at the Bluebell Wine Estate, Uckfield****
- **A reflexology treatment at Nove Medispa, Lindfield****



Plus many other lovely gifts and vouchers to be won! Tickets will be £1 a strip of 5.

MSOPC would like to thank the above local businesses for their very generous donations, also the Comber's Trust for donating £200 towards the cost of the Christmas Party, and the Orchards Shopping Centre who donated vouchers for the raffle.

Bus Times to get to our Christmas Party (times correct at time of going to print)

East Grinstead from the top of the town catch the 270 Metrobus at 13:11 to arrive in Lindfield High Street at 13:54. Return on the 16:30 to arrive at East Grinstead Station at 17:16

Haywards Heath, Perrymount Road catch the 272 Metrobus at 13:59 to arrive at Lindfield High Street at 14:04 OR the 270 Metrobus at 13:24 to arrive at 13:29. Return on the 270 at 15:53 to arrive back at 15:58 OR the 16:53 to arrive back at 16:58.

Burgess Hill Church Road, catch the 272 Metrobus at 13:33 to arrive at Lindfield High Street at 14:04 OR the 270 at 13:00 to arrive at 13:29. Return on the 270 at 15:53 to arrive back at 16:22 OR the 16:53 to arrive back at 17:21.

Picture Presentation, Haywards Heath

Saturday 20th January, 2-4pm, Ashenground Community Centre, Southdown Close, Haywards Heath RH16 4JR.

We will be presenting a painting, painted by our talented Chairlady Barbara Baldwin, to the Ashenground Community Centre. There will be afternoon tea and musical entertainment.

Please book via our answerphone on 01444 242760, leaving the name and phone number of each guest. We won't be able to phone everyone back to confirm, but will add you to our guest list.

We are a friendly bunch and encourage people to feel brave enough to also come on their own and meet some new faces!



A Cacophony of Cakes!

All MSOPC events are free to anyone over 60 in Mid Sussex, and are run by a friendly group of volunteers. Plans are underway for our 2024 activities.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

We held a coffee morning to raise money for Macmillan on 26th September at the Lindfield Evangelical church. Dianne made a huge selection of cakes and Kathryn made her delicious scones. We are very pleased to say that we managed to raise £184.57 for Macmillan. Thank you to all the helpers, to those that came and donated and the Evangelical Church for providing the venue.



Silver Sunday at The Orchards

Our al fresco coffee morning was very busy and The Bay Tree café worked very hard to provide us with tea and cakes at The Orchards Shopping Centre, Haywards Heath on Thursday 5th October.

Clare Jarvis sang songs from the 60's and 70's, including 'Bobby's Girl' for our birthday boy Bobby, as requested by his wife! As always on our Silver Sunday, we were lucky with the weather and it was a lovely October morning. Thank you to the Orchards for providing a brilliant venue and the refreshments from The Bay Tree café, as well as all the ladies in the café and our own volunteers who worked so hard, and Clare Jarvis for keeping us all entertained. Thank you also to everyone who came along.



Silver Sunday in Burgess Hill

Our Elisabeth Willett Silver Sunday coffee morning in the Gateway Baptist Church on 7th October was a much quieter affair and it was nice to have chance to sit and have a chat with those who came. We were lucky to enlist RAF veteran Arthur who we met at our SSAFA event in August, to help us. Once again, Dianne spoilt us with her cakes and we had a very nice morning. Thanks to everyone who helped.



Autumn Lunch

Mervyn, the pastor at the Lindfield Evangelical Church, has decided to hand over the reigns and so on 7th November, gave us a talk about his Christian journey and his various roles, including working on freezing winter nights in Brighton with the homeless. We had a lunch of soup and sandwiches followed by cakes. It was lovely to see so many of you there and our thanks and best wishes go to Mervyn.



Remembrance Sunday

MSOPC laid wreaths at both the Haywards Heath war memorial in Muster Green and the Lindfield Cross War Memorial at All Saints Church on Remembrance Sunday, 12th November.



The Cost of Living Crisis

The cost of living crisis is cited by our local social prescribers and Citizens Advice as the biggest issue currently facing older people. Foodbanks are so in demand that they can no longer rely on donations and are having to buy food in to be able to give people what they need. We hope to offer a few bits of information which may be helpful to you if you are currently struggling financially.

Managing your money

You should be getting 3 cost of living payments of £300 if you are on certain benefits or tax credits. You do not need to apply, if you're eligible, you'll automatically be paid in the same way you usually get your benefits or tax credits. The first payment was in the spring, you should have received the second payment between 31st October and 19th November and the third payment will be in spring 2024. Those born before 25th September 1957 are also entitled to a winter fuel payment of £150 or £300 paid with your normal payment from November. For more information see www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment or phone your local Citizens Advice to check what benefits you should be getting.

Attendance Allowance is said to be one of the DWP's most underclaimed benefits. It is given to those over the state pension age who need help with day-to-day personal care or supervision due to an illness or disability (which could be physical or mental), or if you are terminally ill, and isn't means tested. It is paid at 2 different rates and the amount you get depends on the level of care that you need. You could get extra pension credit, housing benefit or council tax reduction if you get attendance allowance. You do not have to have someone caring for you in order to claim, but if you do have a carer, they may be able to get carer's allowance.

If you are state pension age and on a low income, you could claim pension credits. Pension credit is separate from your state pension. Pension credit tops up your weekly income to £201.05 if you are single and £306.85 if you have a partner. If you get pension credit you could then be entitled to other things such as council tax reduction, and housing benefit. Phone the pension service helpline on 0800 731 0469 or textphone 0800 169 0133 if you're not sure whether you're eligible for extra amounts.

According to Martin Lewis from Money Saving Expert, if you pay your energy bill by monthly direct debit, and you are in credit by more than two- three months of the cost of your bills than you should ask for a refund of the difference. The company are required by law to return it to you.

Saving Water

Did you know that you can get free water saving devices from South East Water? Things like a cistern bag, shower timer and shower heads, which could all help you to reduce how much water you use and save you money. Go to www.southeastwater.co.uk/help/save-water/free-water-saving-devices/ to see what is on offer, or phone 0345 371 0728.

Share Haywards Heath

If you have a one off job or event, which you need tools or equipment for, there is no need to buy them, you can borrow them for a small fee from Share in Haywards Heath. Have a look through their catalogue of items <https://sharehh.lend-engine.com/products>. You can register as a member on the website, and choose what you want to borrow. You will need to collect it from them at 1st Lindfield Scout Hut on Eastern Road, RH16 2LP. They are open Tuesday 9.30 to 11 am and Saturday 9am to 10am.

Ability Net

Ability Net's volunteers provide free IT support to older people and disabled people of any age, anywhere in the UK. Every volunteer is disclosure-checked and can help with all sorts of IT challenges, from setting up new equipment, fixing technical issues, showing you how to stay connected to family, using online services and more. Call 0800 048 7642 or go to abilitynet.org.uk/free-tech-support-and-info/request-free-it-support-home

Access Card

This is a 'disability passport'. The card is powered by a universal access registration scheme, which lets you inform providers quickly and discreetly about the access you need. It may gain you access to things like concessionary ticket prices and complex reasonable adjustments without having to go into loads of personal detail. It costs £15 for 3 years. Apply at www.accesscard.online/apply/, phone 0330 808 5108
Typetalk: 1 800 10330 808 5108.

Eating Well and Wisely

Food is a huge part of our weekly outgoings, and so it is important to make sure that we are making our money go as far as we can in this area. Not just the food itself, but also the cooking can be very expensive with energy prices as they are. If you are cooking for one, it can be very hard to be motivated to cook a proper meal, and so its tempting to have snack foods or ready meals which can be not only unhealthy, but an expensive way of eating.

If you plan ahead, you can decide in advance 2 or 3 meals a week to cook and the ingredients you will need, before you go to the shops. If you have a day which is quiet (maybe a Sunday), you can use that time to cook large quantities of your chosen meals, and then separate into portions to either freeze or refrigerate for another day. This way, you will not have to cook every day, and when you cook, you will cook everything together so making the most of your oven being on. You will also use up your ingredients rather than having for example half an onion sitting in your fridge after you cook.

One thing our committee discussed, was cooking up a whole gammon joint. You can buy them fairly cheaply from any supermarket, and it keeps for a week after it has been cooked. If you put some jacket potatoes in the oven at the same time, then you just need to reheat them when needed. You could also cook some chicken breasts and bag them up individually for another day.

Slimming World also has some advice about eating on a budget. They suggest going for supermarket own label products as they are cheaper, and being wary of 'buy one get one free' offers, as they encourage you to buy more than you need. Use butchers, market and farm shops for meat and veg to get the exact amount you need, and buy whole veg rather than ready prepared as its half the price. Use less meat, as it is expensive, and bulk up meals with vegetables or pulses. Stock up on cupboard staples like dried rice and pasta or cans of veg and dried herbs. Finally, a slow cooker uses much less energy than an oven and cheaper cuts of meat will come out melt-in-the-mouth tender!



Accessing foodbanks

If you find that you cannot afford to buy adequate food, you can get a referral to a foodbank, from Citizens Advice, your GP, housing association or social worker. They will make an appointment to speak to you and if you are eligible, they will give you a voucher for the foodbank, and the address for where to go. The food bank will give you a parcel which should contain enough for 3 days food. They can also supply lots of other items like toiletries. Whilst your food parcel is being prepared, a trained volunteer will chat to you about your situation and can offer a range of services that can help you from reaching a crisis point in the future. They might be able to deliver to you if you live in a rural area or are disabled and can't travel.

If you cannot get a referral, there are foodbanks which do not require a referral, which are run by churches, or the Bentswood Hub on America Lane, Haywards Heath, RH16 3QB. People from any area can use it, as long as you can get there to pick up the food. It is open every day from 10am to 12.30pm. The same is true for the East Grinstead Quarry Café and Community Fridge, 54 Holtys Avenue, East Grinstead, RH19 3EG, which is open Tuesday to Friday 10.30-4pm. The Ascension Food Larder at the Ascension Church, 110 Vale Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 4JS is also free to use and is open Tuesday 9.30-11.30am and Thursday noon-2pm. The Burgess Hill Food Pantry at 25-29 The Martlets, RH15 9NN operates a membership scheme, which is £5 per week, and enables you to choose food with a value of £15-£20 each week. They are open Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings.

Nicola

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 _____

Other happenings around Mid Sussex

Latest Scams

Watch out for scams preying on people worried about the cost of living. Scammers may make false offers of energy refunds or discounts, tax rebates, cost of living payments and food vouchers to steal personal or banking details.

Delivery scams are also on the increase with texts, e-mails or cards claiming to be from a delivery company to reschedule or pay additional delivery fees in an attempt to get people's personal information or bank details. If you are unsure, stop and think before you act.

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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Train ticket offices not closing after all!

We are pleased to report that since the article in our last newsletter about potential ticket office closures, it's been announced that they won't be closing after all. Passenger watchdogs Transport Focus and London Travelwatch objected to the proposals, saying they had received 750,000 responses from individuals and organisations in a public consultation. There were serious concerns, including ticket machine capability, accessibility and how passenger assistance and information would be delivered in the future. On 31st October the government asked train operators to withdraw the proposals.

Menshare Listening Group

A safe space where men can find solace, support, and understanding, this group helps men to talk, have connection and aims to reduce mental health issues. Free to attend, no need to book. Tuesdays 7pm – 9pm at St. Swithun's Parish Office, St. Swithun's Church, St. Swithun's Close, East Grinstead RH19 3BB

U3A Art Group

HHU3A have a few places in their Thursday afternoon art group from 2-4pm. If anyone would like to join, ring Nicola on 01444 483107. Whatever our talents, we all work in different styles and media just for pleasure and the joy of getting together and encouraging one another.

Carers rights day event, Haywards Heath

On Thursday 23rd November from 9.30-5pm, at the Dolphin medical practice in Haywards Heath, Butlers Green Road, RH16 4BN. This is an opportunity to find out your rights as a carer, where you can get help and support and raise awareness of your needs. There will be many local caring organisations there and talks by professional speakers with private consultations when requested.

Age UK—Free exercise class and digital support

Through November and December Age UK have a free exercise class running every Thursday morning at Lamb House from 10.30 – 11.30 am provided by Nuffield Health. In addition, Sky are now running a digital support session in the café at Lamb House every second Friday of the month from 10 am - 12 noon. The next session is on 1st December (brought forward because of Christmas). Bring your devices along with you (laptops, mobiles etc). To help manage numbers call to book on 01444 450248.

Old copper phone lines being replaced by fibre

If you live in Haywards Heath or East Grinstead, work is currently in progress to change your phone line to run on fibre rather than copper. Other areas of Mid Sussex will be changed over in the near future. Your provider must offer a free resilience solution if you don't have a mobile phone. This could be a battery back up unit or a mobile phone, so that you have a back up if there is a power cut. If you have a telecare alarm, ask your supplier to check if it will work with fibre. If buying a new one, check if it is compatible.

Mid Sussex
MSOPC
Older People's Council

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