



*Alone a Whisper,
Together a Voice*

Halton OPEN SPRING 2016 NEWSLETTER



Chair's Welcome

I should like to welcome you all to our latest newsletter, the first since I took over the reins of Halton OPEN as your Chair. Sadly, Lorna Plumpton had to relinquish the Chair for health reasons but I am delighted to have been elected to follow in her footsteps. Lorna achieved a lot for Halton OPEN in growing our membership and raising our profile. I am passionate and enthusiastic about what is to come next.

Almost two years ago, my circumstances changed and last year I started to receive my state pension. I now find myself living alone and starting to experience many of the issues that also affect many of you. I believe this experience will be invaluable in my helping Halton OPEN to fully appreciate your needs.

As we plan our activities for the coming year, we still expect our membership to grow. We fully intend to open more effective communications with our members to understand more fully what we need to do to improve the quality of life for the older residents in Halton. We are already involved with Halton Borough Council in a consultation exercise designed to improve the domiciliary care service. We expect to be involved in other such exercises during the year. To get the very best out of these it is important that we are able to represent accurately our members' views. To that end we are keen to establish a panel of members who would be happy to assist so if you feel you would like to contribute and add your own experience to our "voice" please get in touch either by email or telephone.

We are also passionate about understanding and addressing the problems of loneliness and isolation that affect so many of us with a special emphasis on vulnerability and health fears. We shall be conducting a fresh survey within our membership and we shall be getting out and about within the local community where we hope to meet as many of you as possible. If you have anything you would like to discuss then please let us know as it is fundamental that we hear your views if we are going to succeed.

There are undoubtedly many challenges ahead for Halton OPEN this year. We are moving into a new era and your committee is working hard together to provide the best service we can. We must listen to and learn from the experiences of you, our members, in order to ensure we deliver what you need as best as we can.

With my very best wishes to you all,
Richard Ashworth
Chair, Halton OPEN.

THE VOICE OF HALTON OPEN

Please put your name forward to join our **OPEN** panel—this is **YOUR** chance to have **YOUR** say: Contact Clare Lightfoot on 01928 242034 or e-mail: clarelightfoot@ageukmm.org.uk

AGE RESTRICTIONS ON CANCER SCREENING TESTS

We should like to draw your attention to a recent experience of one of our members who, after routine smear tests ceased for her when she turned 65 years of age, subsequently developed cervical cancer, but had no symptoms. Unfortunately for her, the cancer has spread to other parts of her body where it is untreatable. Had her routine smear testing continued, this may have been identified at an early stage and may have been cured. This brings in to question the application of age restrictions to routine cancer screening. It seems that once a person reaches a certain age they are not automatically sent a request to make a screening appointment or other appropriate arrangement. A person can still request a periodic screening test but as we grow older it becomes easier to forget to think about such things and placing the onus on the potential recipient is likely not to work. We believe that there should be no age restrictions on the automated process for the initiation of such tests and we support either the removal of or extension of age restrictions for all such tests. Halton OPEN has referred this matter to the Director of Public Health at Halton Borough Council, with a copy of the letter going to our two serving MPs.

NHS Breast Screening

Currently carried out on women between the ages of 50 to 70.

After the age of 70, women can request further screening by asking at GP Reception for a telephone number to ring and make an appointment.

Some areas have already extended the ages to include women aged between 47 to 49 and also 71 to 73, though information is scarce as to which areas of the country this applies to. This is part of a study looking at whether to Extend the Breast Cancer Screening Age Range all over the country.

NHS Cervical Screening (Smear Test)

Age 25 – 49 every three years

Age 50 to 64 every five years

Women over the age of 65 can request further screening through their GP.

Bowel Screening

Ages 60 – 74 for both men and women every 2 years

Over 75 can request further screening kits on 0800 707 6060

Prostrate Cancer

Blood tests can be carried out to detect prostrate cancer.

Digital Rectal Examination (DRE) and biopsy only done after patients show certain symptoms.

(Information sourced from NHS Website)

VISIT OUR BRAND NEW WEBSITE

Halton OPEN is pleased to announce that our website will soon be available to give our members an up to date and informative insight into what we are doing to improve the quality of life for the over 50s in our Borough. Visit www.haltonopen.co.uk to find out more.

(Please note that in the short term you may find a holding page only but we ask you to be patient while we put the finishing touches to the site.)



SENIOR MOMENTS



‘One of the signs of old age is that you have to carry your senses around in your handbag—glasses, hearing aid, dentures’—KURT STAUSS

‘There are three signs of old age: loss of memory I forget the other two’ - RED SKELTON, Actor

‘I don’t need you to remind me of my age. I have a bladder to do that for me’ - STEPHAN FRY, Comedian

‘Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been’ - MARK TWAIN, Writer



Laughter is the best medicine

When I started my role as a Social Inclusion Officer at Age UK Mid Mersey, I didn't know what to expect from the people attending my groups. While studying for my degree, I researched how using drama therapy and photographs can help improve the quality of life for people living with dementia. This was my chance to put all the theory I had learned into practice and the results have been far more than I had expected.

Whilst reading out loud some reminiscences of local milkman, people in our groups reflected on the "chink" of the milk bottles being delivered to the door step and there was much laughter as we read notes that had been left for the milkman:

"When you leave my milk, knock on my bedroom window and wake me because I want you to give me a hand turning the mattress".

"Please leave an extra pint of paralysed milk".

Such stories also help encourage a tale or two from our group members. Another topic we covered was how smoking had been fashionable in the past. One lady, who has given up smoking for years, said "I would love to have one last fag before I die" to which her husband retorted "I'll stick one in your mouth when you're in your coffin, so when you're cremated you won't need to ask for a light".

Men's group:

Playing pool on a lopsided pool table at the 'Men's Group' always creates hysterics as my pool playing is really poor. One night I was asked why I was aiming for a ball that had no chance of going into the pocket. When I informed the enquirer of my tactics he announced "If that ball goes into that pocket, I'll buy you a Rolls Royce". Obviously I missed, lucky for him! Meeting humorous characters on a weekly basis makes my role as Social Inclusion Officer enjoyable. As those attending have a good sense of humour, they benefit each other and they leave feeling uplifted by the group session. The only part which is a pain is the temptation of all the cakes and biscuits on offer as I am constantly watching my weight (except at weekends).

Becky Greenhalgh—Social Inclusion Officer, Age UK Mid Mersey. Telephone 01928 575400.

FRUITY SUMMER CHARLOTTE

An easy and healthy pudding—great for a family treat



500g summer fruit (raspberries, blackberries and blueberries)

4 tbsp. Demerara sugar

7 slices from a small cinnamon and raisin loaf

25g butter, softened

Crème fraiche or fromage frais to serve



Heat oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Tumble 3/4 of the berries into a medium baking dish. Whizz the remainder of the berries in a food processor to make a puree, then stir this into the dish along with 2 tbsp. sugar. Spread the loaf slices with butter, then cut into triangles. Cover the top of the fruit with the bread slices, then scatter the rest of the sugar. Cover with foil, bake for 10mins then bake for 5 minutes more until the fruit is starting to bubble and the bread is toasty. Serve with crème fraiche or fromage frais.

USEFUL INFORMATION/CONTACTS

Register of Traders

Did you know that Age UK Mid Mersey have a Register of Traders? For details ring 01928 575 400, or call in at 44 Church Street, Runcorn, WA7 1PR on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 to 1pm.

Widnes Market Stall

There is an Age UK Mid Mersey information and advice stall inside Widnes market (Opposite material stall) on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9.30 am to 1pm—for more details ring 01928 575400.

Helping Hands

Cleaning and General Home Help Services/Companionship/Assisted Shopping Services/Shopping Services (info@yourhelpinghands.co.uk)

Helping Hands Extra

Brand new service to help those living with Dementia and their carers (www.helpinghandsextra.co.uk).

Ring 0151 420 2143 to book an appointment for both Helping Hands services above.

Recycling

Halton Haven will recycle your white goods and they collect free of charge. Ring 01928 712728.

The British Heart Foundation will collect furniture—ring 0808 250 0030. Also the Walton Lea Project on 01925 860143.

Useful Contacts:

Fire alarms check/replacement—ring 0800 141 2561 Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm

Fresh Start—Diet and Exercise Programme—ring 0300 0029 0029— www.haltonhealthimprovement.co.uk

Falls Prevention Service— ring 0300 029 0029 and ask for Debbie or Maureen
www.haltonhealthimprovement.co.uk

Halton Women's Centre: wide range of services such as information and advice—ring 01928 566073. Address; Pendennis Court, Runcorn WA7 2SW, Tues, Wed & Fri 10am to 4pm

Wiltshire Farm Foods Brochure—ring 01244 836786—www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com

Healthwatch Halton: Health and Social Care Signposting Directory—ring 0300 777 6543



[New Women's Institute Branch at Hough Green!!](#)
[St Michael's Social Club, Ditchfield Road, Widnes, WA8 8TF \(next to Hammer and Pincers\)](#)
[Next meeting Wednesday 13th April 2016 @ 8pm](#)
[Contact 020 7371 9300 9am to 5pm Mon to Fri for details](#)
All Welcome.

And finally! This is **your** newsletter, we hope you have enjoyed it. We welcome your ideas on how we can improve the newsletter. Please contact Clare Lightfoot on 09128 242034 or e-mail: clarelightfoot@ageukmm.org.uk