

# Age Concern Heathfield and District Latest Updates

**September 2020**

Due to the current Covid-19 crisis we have been unable to print and distribute our normal version of the newsletter. Instead we have put together this sheet which we hope will update you on what we have been doing and the ways in which we can offer help



## The Shopping Service

We are still running the service with the help of our Volunteers. It is much appreciated by those who still need help and they look forward to a friendly face once a week when their shopping is delivered.

At the height of the pandemic we were looking after 65 households and now we are shopping for 35 each week. Some people can now go out and do their own shopping, or family and friends are no longer in isolation so once again are able help.

We have been very fortunate to gain some new Volunteers from the Vines Cross Community Group to replace some of our early Volunteers, who are now returning to University and full time work.

We owe them all a big thank you. They were all so willing to get involved from the early days of the pandemic thus allowing us to organise support for all our clients and some other local elderly people who needed shopping.

We plan to continue shopping for those who need us at least until we can start running the mini buses again.

For those venturing out to do their own shopping, don't forget the supermarkets have set aside special times when the store will be quieter for their more vulnerable customers. The Co Op and Waitrose slots are Mon-Fri 8.00-9.00am with Sainsbury's being 8.00-9.00am on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

We are watching the Government Guidelines very carefully but with the current restrictions we cannot run either the Minibuses nor the Medical Car Service, as we need to be sure we are keeping both our Clients and our Volunteers as safe as possible.



Heathfield and District  
Reg. Charity No: 205665



## Recent Survey

Thank you to Everyone who replied to our recent Survey about the effects of Covid 19 on our lives.

We had a better response than normally expected from a Survey, which we are sure indicates how much you all care about each other and how best to survive in these unusual times.

50% of those who replied were in a clinically vulnerable position. There is a significant amount of anxiety amongst you all, which is a concern to us as well. Some people seem to be coping well with the situation and are leading reasonably normal lives now.

Nearly everyone has masks and sanitizer to hand, which is encouraging, as it shows we are taking the Government guidelines seriously.

We asked about the need for some means of identification for the more vulnerable people when they are out and about. The replies were very mixed, but they clearly showed that there was not a great deal of enthusiasm to wear anything that might set people apart. Many people thought it would be ignored by others anyway.

A big area of concern was over the lack of local knowledge about the current situation and any possibility that we might be returned to another Lock down in this area.

Currently all our local Supermarkets are continuing with the set times for the more vulnerable customers to shop in relative safety. Let's hope this will continue as it does give some sense of security to those who use the option of early morning shopping.

We will use all the information we gathered to help us plan our future strategy moving forward.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the delivery and collection of the forms and the analysis.

## Calling all knitters!

If anyone would be interested in joining our growing team of knitters you would be very welcome to join us – wool, knitting needles and instructions can be supplied. We have had a wonderful response to date, and as well as knitted squares we have also had some ready -made blankets donated to us. All our blankets and bed runners will be passed on to the residents at Heffle Court.

If you would like to be part of the knitting team or would be happy to help us sew the squares together, please telephone us on **01435 866960**

## A very special thank you!

We would like to thank all the individuals who have taken the time to write lovely letters of thanks to us and for their very kind and generous donations. The money will certainly be put to good use covering some of the extra expenses we have incurred running the new services we have set up to help with the Covid-19 situation.

It makes all our efforts so worthwhile to know that we have made a difference to people and that we may have helped in some small way to make things a little easier during these difficult times.

Thank you all so much – we really do appreciate it.

## Jigsaw and Book Swap

This service has now been running for several weeks and a number of our clients are booking regular visits from the book and puzzle bus.

All items are quarantined for 72 hours before being put back out in circulation, hand sanitisers used and social distancing adhered to on each visit. If you enjoy reading or the challenge of a jig saw and would like to book a visit from the bus please telephone **01435 866960** and we will happily arrange a visit.



## Medical Car Service

As mentioned previously, the rigorous guidelines concerning offering transport to clients is still making it prohibitive for us to resume our Medical Car Service.

We are, however, aware that many hospitals are now sending out appointments to attend outpatient clinics and we know and understand how important these appointments are for you to attend.

With that in mind, we have set aside a portion of our Covid-19 funds to help subsidise the high cost of using commercial taxis to attend hospital appointments.

If you are one of our regular clients and have no family member, neighbour or friend to help take you to hospital, then please contact us to see how we may be able to help subsidise the cost of using commercial taxi services. Please ring the usual Medical Car Service number- **01435 515090**, leave a message stating your name, address and telephone number, together with details of your hospital appointment and one of our team will ring you back.

**All enquiries will be handled in strict confidence.**

Meanwhile we will of course be closely monitoring the government guidelines and will do all we can to resume our transport services as soon as we feel it is safe and practical for us to do so.

## AGM – Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – 7.00pm

We are hoping that restrictions will allow us to hold our AGM as a public meeting, with social distancing, at the Community Centre in Sheepsetting Lane. This will give us the opportunity to review events of the past year, look at our financial situation and outline plans for the future. It is also an opportunity for you to ask any questions and elect the Trustees and Executive Team members for the year ahead.

In the event that the meeting cannot go ahead publicly, we will carry out a postal AGM. Anyone wishing to receive the necessary paperwork and ballot papers please phone **01435 866960** to register your interest.

## Telephone Buddies

Our team of telephone buddies still continues to regularly phone over 120 clients each week for a friendly chat and to ensure everyone is ok. We endeavour to offer a light hearted conversation with a good measure of fun and laughter to cheer you up!

If you or someone you know would benefit from this service please contact us on **01435 866960**



## Heathfield Men's Shed

**Great News.....**the construction of the Men's Shed is complete and the focus is now on installing an electricity supply, insulating the walls, fitting workbenches and setting up the tools and equipment. It is hoped that regular sessions can commence from October onwards, albeit this will involve limited numbers at any one time to allow for social distancing, in line with government guidelines.

An exciting time for all those involved!

A special thank you must go to the Heathfield branch of Waitrose who have awarded the Men's Shed project £166 from their Community Matters scheme.

If you would like to find out more about the Men's Shed or about becoming a member, please phone Nic Stenhouse, membership secretary on **07850 992059**

