

Age Concern Heathfield and District Latest Updates

May 2021

Nearly there.....

We are delighted that after all this time we can report that plans are well underway to reopen our services again from the **1st July!**

Our regular clients have all received letters detailing our plans for winding down our special Covid services and reopening our regular transport and Men's Shed ones.

Whilst it is wonderful to see things slowly returning to normal, it is very important for us all to remember the need to still take things cautiously, and to be mindful of the fact that many people will struggle to get out and about again after such a long period of isolation.

For that reason, we have decided to make it a condition of using our services for clients and volunteers alike, to continue to wear face coverings, to use the hand sanitising equipment available on the buses, to have restricted seating capacity on the buses to allow for better social distancing and ventilation and to ensure everyone has received both their Covid vaccinations.

In addition to this, special sanitising 'bombs' have been purchased for use at the end of each day to sanitise the entire bus ready for the next day's journeys.

We hope that these measures will help to reassure everyone that we are doing all we can to provide a safe and secure environment for us all to enjoy.

This news sheet gives more detail as to what to expect regarding each of our services over the coming weeks, but if there is anything you are still unsure about, please do not hesitate to ask by ringing **866960** and we will be happy to help.

Meanwhile, we shall look forward to seeing you all very soon!

Take care and keep safe.

Dawn and Alan

Dawn Brock & Alan Hale - Co Chairmen



Heathfield and District
Reg. Charity No: 205665

Telephone Buddying



This service will stop at the end of June.

It is hoped that clients will gradually start to feel able to use our transport services to start enjoying the pleasures of being able to go outside and socialise with others face to face once more. This should help to alleviate loneliness and isolation and will take the place of regular phone calls.

Even if you haven't used our transport services previously, we hope that you will feel able to now. Information regarding what trips and journeys are available is detailed below, but for further information please ring **866960**

Minibus Service



Our weekly shopping runs will restart on Thursday 1st July. Clients will be picked up from their homes and taken to the High Street or the Co Op for the opportunity to do their weekly shopping and to allow enough time to enjoy a cup of coffee. Clients who previously used this service will be contacted over the next couple of weeks to see if they would still like a seat on the bus, but this service is open to all, so we welcome anyone new who would like to join us.

The **Country Lunches** held at Punnetts Town are hoping to run a series of light lunches during July and August. These will be held on the following Wednesdays: 14th and 28th July and 11th and 25th August. If you previously attended these lunches, you will be contacted by a member of the Country Lunch team to see if you would still like to attend and to see whether or not you require transport. For all new clients wishing to start, please call the organisers, Annabel Williams on **07808 000615** or Julie Langdon **863690** to book a place.

The **Union Lunches** will reopen on Tuesday 14th September, and clients will be contacted nearer the time to see if they would still like to attend and whether they require minibus transport. For further information please contact Jean Plummer **883483**

In addition to the journeys mentioned above, we are keen to use the summer months to run a number of short outings to local cafes for a tea/coffee. Each trip will be for six clients at a time, and will last for no more than 2 hours. We are keen to give everyone the chance to re-gain their confidence in coming out on the buses again, meet up with others and have the chance to buy a cuppa (and maybe a cake too!). The dates for these small outings are listed overleaf. Anyone who wishes to book a seat should ring the usual number of **866960**. We will start taking bookings for these trips from 1st June.

As you may already be aware, under the rules of our operating licence we are not allowed to charge set fares for journeys on our buses, but we can accept donations. The suggested donation for the short outings and regular runs is £4.



Programme of Coffee/Tea Trips

- Friday 2nd July 10.00am-12.00pm
- Tuesday 6th July 2.00-4.00pm
- Wednesday 7th July 2.00-4.00pm
- Friday 9th July 10.00am-12.00pm
- Tuesday 20th July 10.00am-12.00pm
- Friday 23rd July 10.00am-12.00pm
- Friday 30th July 10.00am-12.00pm
- Tuesday 3rd August 10.00am-12.00pm
- Tuesday 3rd August 2.00-4.00pm
- Wednesday 4th August 2.00-4.00pm
- Friday 6th August 10.00am-12.00pm
- Tuesday 10th August 10.00am-12.00pm
- Wednesday 18th August 2.00-4.00pm
- Friday 20th August 10.00am-2.00pm

Medical Car Service

We are hoping that this service will reopen from 1st July. We have lost a few of our volunteer drivers, and for that reason, until we can recruit more help, priority will be given to the longer journeys to hospital appointments. Local journeys to doctor's surgeries, dentists and clinics etc will now cost a flat rate of £5, whilst the longer journeys will be charged as before at 45p per mile plus an admin fee. If we are unable to fulfil a request for transport, we will do our best to make alternative suggestions and, in some cases, offer financial assistance to help cover the cost of a commercial taxi. The telephone number for the medical car service is **515090** where an answerphone will record details of your journey. We ask that as much notice as possible be given, especially for hospital appointments, to enable us to find suitable cover. All bookings will be confirmed by one of our administrators.

Jigsaw and Book Swap Services

This service has now closed. We are very grateful to Ken who has run this service brilliantly throughout the lockdown period and we know that those of you who used the service appreciated the opportunity to borrow books and jig saws.

Thank you to all those who donated supplies of books and puzzles to us which enabled us to run this service so successfully.



News from Heathfield Men's Shed

During the three month lockdown, progress on developing the Men's Shed was necessarily limited, but since the end of March we have been working hard to prepare it for re-opening to Members. We have taken advantage of the good weather in April and being allowed to meet outside, to catch up on some of the exterior jobs such as re-laying the pathway – this should help to avoid the worst of the mud during the bad weather – as well as other small but necessary jobs.

Inside, after lengthy delays, we now at last have a power supply, so the basics such as being able to switch on lights without using a generator and, most importantly, boiling a kettle using mains instead of bottled gas are now possible! We are also now able to connect and test the tools and equipment bought using the generous grants from various organisations, ready for Sheddors to use. We have also spent our time putting procedures in place to ensure that once we are open Sheddors can use the facilities confidently and safely.

Assuming the "roadmap" proceeds as planned, we are looking forward to welcoming limited numbers inside as per the rule of six for induction and training from the 17th of May, with a full opening soon after the 21st June for both those wishing to be creative, or just wanting a cup of tea and a chat!

Watch this space!

Ken Jarvis

If you are interested in becoming a member or would like to find out more about the Men's Shed, please ring our membership secretary, Nic Stenhouse on: **07850 992059** or email : shed@ageconcernheathfield.org.uk

