



Dear members

August 2018

We start with the very sad news that our Life President Alan Cox has died. Our Treasurer John Williams gave a talk at Alan's funeral which is shown below. Alan was an outstanding local citizen and he is very much missed.

On a more cheerful note, we have an emphasis on healthy lifestyle with an article about Lifestyle Choices and a free taster session for a gentle strength and balance class. You will find inside an update on this year's Seniors Fair and the agenda for our AGM on 30 October. We also have an article about Citizen's Advice St Albans District which is now open in Harpenden.

All good wishes, Fiona Gaskell, Chairman

Dates for the Diary:

Thurs 20 September 1.30 p.m.	Free taster session, Park Hall
Tues 16 October 10.30 a.m.–1.30 p.m.	Seniors Fair, Public Halls
Tues 30 October 2.30 p.m.	A.G.M., Park Hall

ALAN COX

Talk by our Treasurer John Williams at Alan's funeral

It is my pleasure and privilege to speak about Alan and his enormous contribution to the community in Harpenden where he lived for over 40 years. He was a self-made man, proud of his Cockney heritage, who combined a fine intellect with a resourceful drive and the ability to get things done.

We go back to the troubled years of the Cold War with the USSR when Alan was asked by the Home Office to be Harpenden's Town Community Adviser and to help organise a team to be ready for any major incident and any following fallout. Fortunately the threat did not materialise. Having time on his hands, he took up bowls which he enjoyed for a number of years, helping many people as a qualified bowls coach.

Joining the Harpenden Village Rotary Club proved to be a catalyst for achieving so much. At only his fourth meeting he stood up and asked if the club was interested in 4 new members who had been attending “if so get your finger out and get us inducted” He was President for the year 98/99 and named a Paul Harris fellow in 2000 for outstanding achievements. This included Rotary Open Gardens, a Town Map, the Rotary Club Handbook, drug awareness and ensured the Sensory Garden at Bowers Parade was completed. What about the campaign to save and improve the Southdown ponds, now an attractive feature of Harpenden Common. Also the Health & Safety co-ordinator for the Millennium Celebrations and the River Lea Conservation Group for which he was awarded a Millennium Awards Fellowship. Alan was one of the team that helped create the Village Probus Club of Harpenden, a direct offshoot of Rotary, and became the 4th Chairman. He, of course, improved things and introduced the concept of teams of 3 to run the club and the various groups, which involved many of the members. Also the introduction of the absentee newsletter helped us all keep in touch, always a concern for other people. The Club is now approaching 60 members, our agreed limit.

We move effortlessly to the Harpenden Trust, and a challenge even for Alan. Health and Safety had not been on their agenda. He took over as Chairman in 2005 and helped change old practices, bringing in a new style annual newsletter. The link with Abbeyfield and another Alan proved to be decisive, heralding in a new Community Fund which has helped many local groups and charities. The Go Together Travel Club, now ably run by Marian, was developed from Alan’s wish to help people living alone, and it has been a great success.

After retiring as Chairman of Harpenden Trust, Alan formed a group to look at communication and advice amongst the elderly which became Harpenden Seniors Forum, now with some 1400 members. He relinquished the Chairmanship through ill health and was elected Life President. We celebrated our 10th Anniversary recently with afternoon tea for 100 members and I am delighted to say Alan attended although very ill at the time and he was able to meet so many of his old friends. This also coincided with Alan and Rita’s anniversary being married for over 50 wonderful years. Rita has always been at Alan’s side throughout, with unstinting love and support especially in the last five years.

Alan was a man of the highest integrity and honest to the core, caring so much for others, brave to challenge authority and pomposity in all its forms in order to get things done. If I have missed out other facts about Alan please forgive me, there has not been the time on this occasion to cover everything. Last year we decided to put Alan’s name forward to the Cabinet Office for a UK Honour which was still current, but sadly no longer following his death. Rita was able to tell Alan of the nomination whilst in hospital, an endorsement of how he was seen by his peers. I must tell you however, that it still irked him that in our early days of Rotary I fined him 50p at a meeting for not wearing a tie, he thought a cravat would do. On behalf of your very many friends, goodbye Alan, we have been privileged to be part of your story and your life.

John Williams

**Seniors Fair Tuesday 16 October 10.30 a.m. – 1.30 p.m.
Harpenden Public Halls**

This is our biggest event of the year, and you will find over 30 stalls representing a wide range of local organisations, charities and 8 commercial organisations. Last year's event was very crowded, but this year we will have more space as we have been promised the full use of both halls.

There will be several new exhibitors including Connecting Harpenden, Citizens Advice St Albans District, PegasusLife Park House, Nannies 4 Grannies Ltd. and Prostate Cancer UK. As well as browsing the stalls and picking up useful information, you will be able to enjoy refreshments provided by Harpenden Village W.I. in aid of Essex & Herts Air Ambulance.

Please see the enclosed invitation and tell your friends about it. No need to book – see you there!

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF THE 9TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
HARPENDEN SENIORS FORUM**

**30 OCTOBER 2018
2.30 P.M.**

PARK HALL, LEYTON ROAD

AGENDA (copies available at the AGM)

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of last AGM and matters arising
3. Chairman's report
4. Treasurer's report
5. Approval of accounts and appointment of an Independent Examiner
6. Election of officers: Fiona Gaskell, Chairman; John Williams, Treasurer; Denny Collie, Secretary
7. Report on HSF phone-line
8. Any other business

Break for refreshments.

After the break, Steven Hamilton, Partner at Taylor Walton, will talk about legal matters of special interest to seniors including wills and power of attorney.

Annual General Meeting 30 October 2018 at 2.30 p.m. Park Hall, Leyton Rd

On page 3 you will find the agenda for our ninth AGM, and we hope you will attend to hear about our progress in the past year as well as future plans.

Membership is stable at over 1400 seniors. The phone-line information service continues to run successfully, and we are very grateful to the volunteers who give their time to handle calls.

Our biggest event in 2017 was the Seniors Fair. We had a record number of visitors, and for the 2018 event we have managed to book both halls so the event should be less crowded.

In 2017 we held a successful free taster session for Strength and Balance classes which seniors can book with the organisers and attend regularly. The taster session will be repeated in September 2018.

In 2017 and 2018 we held further cookery classes for men organised by The Kitchen Front. We hope that in future seniors will be able to book these classes directly with The Kitchen Front.

Our new website is up and running, and seniors can use it to join HSF online.

We expect the business of the AGM to be dealt with quickly, and after a break for refreshments there will be a talk by Steven Hamilton, Partner, Taylor Walton, about wills and power of attorney.

We look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Fiona Gaskell
Chairman

Lifestyle Choices

Notes on a presentation by Dr Alka Cashyap to Davenport House PPG
Reproduced with the kind permission of the PPG



So important now are lifestyle choices to the prevention of disease that the Royal College of General Practitioners have started a training course to make it a top priority. Genetics only accounts for 10% of disease risk, 90% being due to lifestyle, behaviour and environment. 60% of us are overweight and 30% of under 16's are actually obese.

So our **diet choices** should be –

- ✓ 5 fruit and veg a day
- ✓ 2 meat free days a week, and grill rather than fry
- ✓ 2 portions of fish a week, one being oily fish
- ✓ Use unsaturated fat like olive oil
- ✓ Eat wholegrain carbohydrate rather than processed
- ✓ Eat 30g of fibre a day from different sources (1 portion of All Bran has only 5g!)
- ✓ Keeping to only 6g of salt a day can reduce systolic blood pressure by 10mm
- ✓ Drink at least 1.5 litres a day

Exercise reduces heart disease, diabetes, stroke, peripheral vascular disease, osteoarthritis, chronic pain, falls and mental health. We are one of the worse countries for physical activity and should be aiming at 2.5 hours of moderate intensity a week. Over 65's should do balance and co-ordination exercises at least 2x a week. Make it simple outdoor walking or indoors with an exercise DVD or even better if also social in a group.

A big **no to smoking!** The average non-smoker lives 11 years longer than the average smoker. Smoking 20 cigarettes costs £3000 per year which is surely motivation enough to stop!

High **alcohol consumption** is a major risk to health. Although 14 units/week is the guidance figure for men and women, these should be spread out over 3 days or more. Several alcohol-free days each week are recommended. 1 unit wine = 62.5ml, i.e. 1 small glass.

SO!!! – what can we do to help ourselves? Try perhaps to identify what you personally need to change, and then how you are going to do it and what help you need. Changing habits is extremely hard and needs inner motivation. Keep thinking of the health statistics well publicised in the press and think of the health benefits. You will be a good role model to your children and grandchildren. Excuses are many but.....

Tip for Success:

1. **Be clear** on what you need to change and why
2. **Be specific** about what you are going to do
3. **Think about** how you will measure your success
4. **Who** will you be accountable to?
5. **How** will you reward yourself?
6. **Don't worry** if you fail at first. Learn from experience, try again.

GO FOR IT and GOOD LUCK

Free Cheerful Chums Gentle Strength and Balance Taster Event
Thursday 20 September 1.30 p.m. – 3 p.m. at Park Hall, Leyton Rd.



The Cheerful Chums classes offer a complete and gentle body workout for the older adult that focuses on exercises to enhance and maintain your lifestyle. It is a strength and balance class designed to improve mobility and quality of life.

Join The Cheerful Chums for a free taster event on 20 September 1.30 p.m. – 3 p.m. and see for yourself how you can maintain and improve your own mobility.

All abilities are welcome (please be aware of restrictions if you are relying on a wheelchair, some exercises are done standing).

Please book your place in advance for the free taster session as spaces are limited. Contact Harpenden Seniors Forum phone-line 01582 462926 between 10 a.m. and 12 noon Mon – Fri or leave a message with your phone number. We expect this event to be popular, so book promptly to reserve your space.

If you like the free taster session, you can book with The Cheerful Chums to attend the classes on a regular basis. The sessions are usually held at Park Hall in Harpenden on Thursdays from 1.30 p.m. - 2.30pm.

The Cheerful Chums run 6 week courses at £6 per session pay as you go.

Call:

Melanie Reis
07846 725746
Karen Moore
07986 994817

or email **The Cheerful Chums** on 124mel124@gmail.com

Harpenden Hopper bus service stopped on 9 August, relaunch in the Spring

For more information please call Harpenden Seniors Forum 01582 462926.

Citizens Advice in Harpenden



After a two-year absence, Citizens Advice is delighted to be providing an advice service in Harpenden once again. We are now offering a drop-in service and pre-booked advice sessions on Mondays and Thursdays between 10am and 1 pm in the High Street Methodist Church.

As a result, local people will no longer have to travel to St Albans to seek help. We know that it has been difficult for some older people and for those with disabilities or a long-term illness to make the journey to St Albans and we are very pleased that this will no longer be necessary.

The re-launching of this new service has been made possible by the generous support of local churches, the Town Council and other organisations that have backed the service financially, and also by the volunteers who will give up their time to provide advice to the citizens of Harpenden. We are very grateful to them all for their help.

For those who do not know us, Citizens Advice offers free, confidential and impartial advice on a wide range of subjects, including benefits, debt, housing and consumer matters. We also campaign on issues such as scams awareness and lower energy costs.

Although the service has only been open for three months, there are already signs that demand for our advice will be strong in Harpenden. If this remains the case, we will look at the feasibility of providing more sessions each week.

June Chapman
Chief Executive

Citizens Advice St Albans District (CASTAD)

Tel: 01727 859 565

Mobile: 07753 854010

Web: www.castad.org.uk

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

We are always looking for more volunteers to join our lively teams. The current opportunities are:

- Help to staff our phone-line one morning a fortnight from your own home. You would divert the HSF number to your own phone between 10 a.m. and 12 noon. You would communicate with other phone-line volunteers via email, and there are regular meetings of the team of volunteers.
- If you like fresh air and exercise, help us with our newsletter deliveries. You would deliver a batch of letters to members locally. Each round takes about an afternoon.

To find out more about these opportunities, please contact Fiona Gaskell via our phone-line 462926 or harpendseniorsforum@btconnect.com

HAVE YOU EVER CALLED OUR FRIENDLY PHONELINE?



We have a team of friendly volunteers answering calls between 10 a.m. – 12 noon Mon – Fri. Seniors call us with a wide range of questions about local activities or services such as sources of grants, care homes etc. Our volunteers have lived in Harpenden for quite a while and they have extensive local knowledge. If they can't answer your question, they should be able to tell you who can help. Call us on 462926.

IS YOUR ADDRESS LABEL CORRECT?

Please let us know if the information on your label is no longer correct. Call our phone-line on 462926 or email harpendseniorsforum@btconnect.com

HANDBOOK DISCONTINUED

We receive occasional enquiries asking if we have plans to re-issue the Seniors Handbook. Unfortunately the answer is no. Updating the contents has proven to be difficult and time consuming. We therefore took the decision to discontinue production rather than produce incorrect or out of date information.

A FINAL WORD

We hope you found this newsletter of interest – all good wishes from the committee.