Welcome
Hi everyone,

Welcome to the third issue of 50+ News and Views, which is reaching more and more people in Stevenage. I have had great feedback from readers with people coming forward to help distribute the newsletter and some looking for opportunities to volunteer.

In this edition, you can read articles on caring, volunteering, funding and local activities which I hope you will find useful and interesting.

Thank you for continuing to provide feedback, this is very helpful to influence future newsletters, so please keep in touch. If there are any issues that you would like covered, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you.

You can contact me on:
Fiona Rolfe 01438 242099
fiona.rolfe@stevenage.gov.uk

Stevenage Carers Support Group announced as Mayor’s charity of the year

The Stevenage Carers Support Group is a peer-led group of carers that originally met at a local community centre. Unsure of their future following funding cuts, the group were offered a new meeting space by Stevenage Borough Council. Since then, the group has now grown from 13 to 30 people and with support from the council’s Local Community Budget, has been able to secure meeting rooms at Stevenage Leisure Centre.

Find out about funding
Try the free Grantnet funding search facility or browse Grants4Hertfordshire to get funding advice and find out what your group might be eligible for at hertsdirect.org/your-community/funding/
Dementia sufferers feel lonely, Alzheimer’s Society reports

Nearly two thirds (62 per cent) of more than 250,000 people with dementia who live on their own are lonely, according to Alzheimer’s Society’s new report Dementia 2013. This compares to just 24 per cent of over 55 year olds.

Dementia 2013: The hidden voice of loneliness, is the second annual report exploring how well people with dementia are living. It found that over half of the general public (54 per cent) believe that people with dementia have a bad quality of life.

Alzheimer’s Society is calling on commissioners to ensure appropriate support services are available, whilst urging people and organisations to play their part in helping ensure their communities are dementia friendly.

Supporting dementia carers in Stevenage

As part of the Carer Friendly Community, Carers in Hertfordshire is proud to be hosting an Admiral Nurse, in partnership with Dementia UK.

Tia Davolls joined the Carers in Hertfordshire team in March. She is a registered mental health nurse who specialises in dementia and has a broad range of skills and knowledge to impart to family carers. Her aim is to improve the health and wellbeing of carers and enable families to understand the impact of dementia, manage everyday life in the best way possible, be supported with decisions as the condition progresses and plan for the future in a positive way.

Anyone in the Stevenage area caring for someone with an actual or probable dementia diagnosis can access Tia’s support, whether it’s a recent diagnosis or you’ve been caring for a long time.

Anyone can refer to Tia. Carers can refer themselves, or be referred by GPs, social workers or friends and family. To refer just call 01992 58 69 69 or email Tia at tia.davolls@carersinherts.org.uk

If you’re referring someone else, you must have their permission first.

Can you speak up for seniors in Stevenage?

Stevenage Seniors Forum, a group representing older people in the town, are calling for new members.

The forum, made up of local residents involved with community and voluntary agencies, meet monthly to represent local 50+ views in consultation on local services including Lister Hospital, the council and transport.

If you’re interested in sharing your views, contact Fiona on 01438 242099 for more details.
Rose is blossoming as a volunteer

Dedicated volunteer Rose Hamilton was recognised at a special Green Space awards ceremony and awarded a year’s membership to the Royal Horticultural Society recently.

A committed volunteer in Stevenage, Rose is an established member of the town’s Green Space Volunteer Group and the Friends of the Town Centre Gardens and has supported maintenance projects at Fairlands Valley Park, coppicing work at Whomerley Wood, plus Wild Stevenage activities.

If you would like to get involved, there’s plenty of volunteering opportunities in a range of activities including, photography, research and events that make a big difference to green spaces in the town. Contact Julia Hill on 01438 242242 for details.

Calling all would-be volunteers

Local charity Age UK Hertfordshire is looking for volunteers who can help older people remain independent and active for as long as possible.

Age UK Hertfordshire has a wide variety of volunteering opportunities which could fit around your schedule and suit your interests. Roles range from visiting an isolated older person in their home, giving information and advice, assisting at a 10 to 3 club or day centre, supporting healthy eating and exercise groups or helping the charity to raise awareness and funds by supporting its fundraising team at events in your local area.

To ensure you gain the most out of your volunteering experience the charity provides relevant training, ongoing support and out of pocket expenses.

Whether you can spare an hour each week or just a couple of hours each month, your support could help change the lives of older people in Hertfordshire. For further information please visit ageuk.org.uk/Hertfordshire call the HR Team on 01707 386060 or email volunteering@ageukherts.org.uk

• Date for your diary
Singing for the Brain - Thursdays 2.00pm to 3.30pm at Stevenage Community Arts Centre
Lister to become a carer friendly hospital

East and North Herts NHS Trust has just signed up to be part of the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy to become a carer friendly hospital.

People may become carers in a hospital setting, or they may see their caring responsibilities increase following a hospital admission as a result of a fall or similar incident. The impact of caring on health also means that carers are more likely to be admitted themselves; for example, carers caring for someone for over 50 hours a week are at 23% higher risk of a stroke than non-carers.

The pilot project is running in tandem with the carer friendly community project, and will run in Lister Hospital until March 2014. It will have an initial focus on the carers of stroke survivors. The impact of better support to carers on readmission rates, length of stay, and delayed transfers of care, as well as the carer experience and outcomes for carers will all be considered as part of the project.

Making Lister Hospital more carer friendly includes:

• recruitment of a carers’ lead role at the hospital
• development and implementation of a carers’ policy to help raise awareness
• involvement of carers in developing hospital policy and practice,
• promotion of a direct referral to carers in Hertfordshire to access support
• concessionary parking for frequent visitors

For further information, contact Leanne Welch, Carer Lead, East and North Herts NHS Trust - 01438 286373.

Carer’s Passport

Local charity Carers in Hertfordshire, working with Hertfordshire County Council, have launched a new discount card for local carers. If you care, unpaid, for a friend or family member, you could get offers and discounts at businesses across Stevenage with a Carers’ Passport Discount Card.

The photo ID card entitles carers to discounts at businesses including Boots, Stevenage Leisure and Hollywood Bowl as well as local coffee shops, theatres and therapists. And when you register you can also access Carers in Hertfordshire’s other free support services, including information and advice, courses and breaks. To find out more, or to apply for your Carers’ Passport Discount Card, call 01992 58 69 69, email carerspassport@carersinherts.org.uk or apply online at www.carersinherts.org.uk/carerspassport

Portable Criminal Record checks

Volunteers and employees of services to older people will be pleased to hear that they no longer have to apply for a new criminal records check for each new job application. One successful application to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will cover an employee or volunteer across multiple organisations provided the certificate is up to date. Following campaigning from the voluntary sector, volunteers will be able to use the service for free.
Funding award for Irish Network

The Irish Network Stevenage (INS) has announced an award of funding for three years from Henry Smith Charity.

INS is a local charity, working to help all older people to live independently in their own homes and to combat social isolation amongst older people. INS arranges monthly social events and also has a vibrant outreach programme for the elderly and housebound members of the community - making approximately 660 home visits per year.

Over the years INS has gone from strength to strength. This funding has given them the financial security to develop their services and represents huge support when in these financially challenging times, it is difficult to secure long term funding for small charities.

Carers and employment

Stevenage firm MBDA hosted an event for Crossroads Care to raise awareness of employment opportunities for carers.

Local dignitaries including the Mayor and Mayoress of Stevenage, councillors and the MP attended to discuss the national situation for carers looking for work and what improvements can be made locally to support them into work.

Introducing Healthwatch Hertfordshire

If you’re involved in health and social care you might want to keep an eye on Healthwatch Hertfordshire – a consumer champion representing the needs of anyone using health and social care services in the county. Healthwatch Hertfordshire is made up of individual and community groups who work together to improve local health and social care services. Anyone can join – members of the public, carers, service users, community leader and patients. Everyone’s views matter.

Find out more at the Healthwatch pages at Hertfordshirelink.org.uk or telephone 01707 275978.

• Date for your diary
The Irish Network Stevenage - day trip to Southend - 14 August
What’s on offer

Here is a round-up of events, classes learning opportunities and dates for your diary in Stevenage:

Age Concern support sessions at Pod 53:

Age UK advice on insurance

Hearing advice drop in - 2nd Wednesday of each month 12.30 to 2.30pm.

Solicitor – 3rd Wednesday of each month afternoons.

Benefits Advice – 1st and 4th Wednesday of each month, mornings.

Pod 53 contact, call Bernadette on 01438 318866.

Irish Network Stevenage (INS)

The INS social events are taking place on 17 July and 18 September from 2 to 4pm at Bedwell Community Centre. Everyone is welcome and entry is only £1.50 for members and £2.50 for non-member.

A day trip to Southend will be taking place on 14 August. Pick-up will be at 10am at Bedwell Community Centre and 10.15am at Matalan, returning from Southend at 5.30pm. Tickets cost £11 for members and £13 for non-members.

Contact Elaine on 01438 725400 or email info@irishnetworkstevenage.org.uk

Singing for the Brain

Sessions take place on Thursdays 2.00pm to 3.30pm run by the Alzheimer’s Society at Stevenage Community Arts Centre, Roaring Meg Retail Park, Stevenage, SG1 1XN, call 01707 265326 for details.

Good Companions

Over 50’s Social Club meets every Tuesday 2 to 3.45pm for outings, quizzes and social chat. Attendance costs 70p at Bedwell Community Centre and refreshments are available.

Contact Sheila Robertson on 01438 314839 or email bedwellct@yahoo.co.uk

Computer taster sessions at Stevenage Library

If you’d like to get to grips with general computing including emailing, the internet, word processing and more, try a one-to-one session at Stevenage Central Library.

Training costs £5, call 0300 1234 049 for further details.

Carer’s Café

The café, providing support to carers is open Mondays 10 am to 12 noon at Crossroads Day Centre, Roebuck. Contact Jo Wilkinson 01462 455578 for details.
Keep Well, Stay Active

Sessions to help you stay healthy and improve posture, stamina, flexibility and muscular strength are available in Stevenage. Classes will be taking place on the following times and are a good opportunity to enjoy some gentle exercise and meet new people:

- **Mondays**: Mozart Court, Fairview Road from 10.30 to 11.30am
- **Tuesdays**: Scarborough Centre, Symonds Green from 10 to 11am
- **Wednesdays**: Bedwell Community Centre, from 9.15 to 10.15am
- **Thursdays**: St. Hugh and St. Johns, Mobbsbury Way, from 10.30 to 11.30am
- **Fridays**: Archer Road Community Centre, Pin Green, from 10.45 to 11.45am

Contact Iris Maggs on 01438 489135 or email iris.maggs@btinternet.com

Douglas Drive 40th Anniversary Celebration

**Summer fete and barbeque on Saturday 20 July**

Join us for a fundraising event for the whole community which will take place on the green throughout the day. There will be yummy barbeque food, stalls and fun games.

Tea and Swing – Friday 26 July, 3.30 to 5.30pm, £2.50 per ticket in advance.

Date for your diary

Douglas Drive 40th Anniversary Celebration Summer fete and barbeque on Saturday 20 July
Older People’s Strategy

Stevenage Borough Council are working with partners, community groups and residents to develop an older people’s strategy for Stevenage. We will be speaking to people about the draft older people’s strategy and the emerging priorities. We will be asking if the priorities we are working on are relevant and also if we have missed anything.

Priorities

• Improving communications and information
• Supporting older people and their carers living at home
• Helping older people to improve their health and wellbeing
• Helping older people access local services and activities (including volunteering, learning, entertainment, feeling safe and doing all we can to help end loneliness)

We welcome your views; I will be in the Town Centre on July 24th from 11am – 3pm, please drop by to talk over a cup of tea. You can also contact me on 01438 242099 or email fiona.rolfe@stevenage.gov.uk

Exercise Group for over 50s

Join us to improve your health and fitness, in a friendly, encouraging atmosphere!

These weekly exercise classes are delivered by a fully qualified exercise professional and are designed to provide a full body workout to achieve weight loss. Come along and try a free taster session in a relaxed and friendly environment. Designed for people over 50 they provide a great starting point for those people who are new to exercise or are just returning from a long break.

Every Monday 7-8pm
Chells Manor Community Centre, Emperors Gate, Stevenage

Try a free taster session
£4 per session thereafter

To book contact:
Joe Capon
Tel: 01707 281004
E: j.capon2@herts.ac.uk

Did you know …..

Do you know that as part of the ageing process the following changes occur to your body?

• The amount of oxygen our muscles use decreases by 10% per decade, making them inefficient.

• The amount of blood pumped by the heart each minute also decreases by 10% per decade and also reduces the amount of blood flow to your muscles.

• Your blood pressure naturally rises due to a build-up of mineral deposits and hardening in your arteries, which can lead to a heart attack or stroke.

• The amount of air you breathe in per minute decreases by 50% by the age of 70, leading to increased pressure on your respiratory and circulatory systems.

The good news is the regular physical exercise combined with a sensible balanced diet can have a significant bearing on all of the above.