

Maidstone & Malling Carers Project

Issue 31 June 2011



Newsletter

Tel: 01622 685276

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Dear Carer

Welcome to the summer edition of your Carers Newsletter. New estimates show that care provided by the 6.4 million unpaid carers in the UK is now worth a staggering £119 billion every year - which far exceeds the cost of the entire NHS! Carers UK says 'these new figures send a clear message to the Government: 'Carers contribute so much and they deserve better in return'.

We hope that many of you will join us in marking Carers Week 13 -19 June. The theme for our Carers' Forum on 15 June is finances [programme enclosed] and on Saturday 18 June we will be joining up with other carers from around Kent for a Carers' Picnic and Family Day on Walmer Green. We will also be trying to identify new carers at various community access points.

So far the weather has been truly like summer, it would be ideal if the sunshine could continue - but along with some rain during the night!

Best wishes.

Help us raise funds for carers activities when buying goods on line
Sign up at: www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/carersproject
and start making a difference...simply by shopping!
 You can also raise money for carers while you search the internet - change your home page or search using carersproject.easysearch.org.uk
and we will earn money every time you use it - both these ways of raising extra funds for us will be at no extra cost to you!

carers@vam-online.org.uk

If you can help us cut costs by having your newsletter sent by email please let us know

Barbara Hagan : Christine Smith: Jane Thomas : Maureen Belcher : Elayne Oxley : Jane Pantony



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 e-mail: carers@vam-online.org.uk
www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject.asp

KCC consulting on charges for adult social care services

As a result of the current financial climate KCC have had to make decisions that both save money and help protect front line services. In light of the increasing demand for services and the need to save money the council is looking to make changes to how it charges for services [other than residential care] which will increase the amount of income it receives.

The following is being proposed;

1. charge people who use mental health services in the same way as all other people in receipt of services [from spring 2012]
2. include day care and transport as part of the services that can be charged for [from spring 2012]
3. increase the amount of available income that is taken into account when working out a person's charge [from 80% to 100%]
4. reduce the amount allowed for disability related expenditure [i.e. not counted as available for charging due to person having to meet additional costs arising from being ill/disabled] from £21 to £17 a week for everyone

Everyone currently receiving a service will be directly sent information about these proposals and asked their views. Anyone with an interest can also respond by;

- requesting information and questionnaire **0800 298 6002**
- completing online questionnaire **www.kent.gov.uk/fsccharging**
- Attending attending a public meeting at County Hall on **22 June 7pm-8pm** [place will need to be booked] *Barbara will be attending and is happy to offer a lift.*

Consultation period ends 31 July 2011

Carers and returning to paid work

Are you wishing to return to work after being a full time carer, or would you like to find out what opportunities there are to balance your caring role alongside some paid work?

If the answer is yes then let us know. If there is enough interest we could host a special 'Work Preparation Event' presented by Jobcentre Plus and Pinnacle Training. It would provide you with an opportunity to find out about what training and support is on offer at Jobcentre Plus; explore the skills you have developed as a carer and how these transfer to the workplace, and learn about what in-work benefits are available to support you back to work.



Please get in touch if interested.

Call us on **01622 685276**

Kent Carers Emergency Card

If you have changed address, phone number or your nominated emergency contacts need to be changed please let Jane know straight away just in case that emergency actually happens!

If you haven't joined the emergency card scheme yet, ring Jane for a form or to find out more. It's easy to do and will give you peace of mind that should anything happen to you while you are away from the person you care for, that a pre-arranged emergency plan can be put into action.



Ring Jane Thomas on 01622 685276

Elaine Oxley, Carer Support Worker

Some of you will already be aware that there has been a Pilot Project running for a year providing better NHS Support to Carers. This is now continuing as a Carer Service across West Kent. My work is around the GP side of the NHS, with surgeries throughout Maidstone and Malling, and I am now part of Maidstone & Malling Carers Project. My colleague Jane Pantony, some of you may have also come across, is assigned to Maidstone Hospital, and will be there to support you if someone you care for has been admitted, and you would like to access her part of the service.

If you are providing help and support to a relative, partner, friend or neighbour who cannot manage because of disability, addiction, illness or frailty then it will probably be of benefit to you to register with your GP as a carer.

Many Carers have their own health problems, sometimes caused or added to by the physical and emotional demands of their caring role.

Possible benefits and services for you at your Practice include:

- Health and welfare checks
- Recognition and validation as a carer
- Staff awareness of your caring role, enabling them to be more sympathetic to your situation and they maybe able to offer more flexible/convenient appointments or home visits.
- Flu vaccinations
- Support group

When registering as a Carer at the Practice they will be more aware of your needs and can offer you a more personalised service.

If you would like more information, a home visit or to pop in and talk to me at Marsham Street or your GP practice, then please contact me on:

Telephone: 01622 230729 or my work mobile number **07581 548911**



Need confidential emotional support?

People feeling distressed, anxious, or down, are able to call the Mental Health Matters helpline

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

or chat with a counsellor by email at timeonline@mentalhealthmatters.co.uk

Visit to The Goodman Centre by Jane Thomas (MMCP)

In March 2011 I was invited to visit the Goodman Centre. The Goodman Centre is a day centre managed by Age Concern and based in Maidstone [specifically for those diagnosed with Dementia/Alzheimers](#). Clients also have to be a resident of the Borough of Maidstone Social Services area and be over the age of 50.

I arrived just as the clients were having lunch in the light, modern dining room, which had been cooked from scratch on the premises by Tina the cook. Lunch was taken at each client's individual pace with assistance available from the staff. The building is a large converted bungalow, with a conservatory and garden. Inside it is light, airy and spotlessly clean, with many comfortable armchairs. The garden has a summer house where residents can sit and there is the opportunity to garden as well. All of the staff were friendly and very welcoming and seem to really enjoy their jobs; they work hard to ensure that each client's individual needs and interests are catered for. The centre is secure and equipped for all dementia sufferers and can take up to 20 clients at one time.

The centre is managed by Terry Woods who is a Registered General Nurse along with the Assistant Manager Sandra Wells and Care Assistants Lottie Watson and Louise McPherson. Clients attend the centre for 6 hours and can either come in by transport provided by Age Concern or by their own means. There are many activities arranged for clients and also the option of one to one interaction. The cost is £44 per day and clients can attend up to twice a week. Funding may be available from Social Services, dependant on an individual's circumstances.

For more information please contact Age Concern on 01622 753618 or Centre Manager Terry Woods on 01622 736966 or visit www.ageconcernmaidstone.org.uk

The Community Hub Project – Age Concern

The Community Hub Project is an initiative set up by Age Concern Maidstone with the aim of reaching the older citizens of Maidstone who live in rural parishes. We realise that it is not always easy to get the support and company desired when you live outside of the town centre. Our hub base in [Staplehurst](#) is in the library, [every Tuesday, between 11 and 1pm](#). Currently, we have two community hubs in the processes of being set up;

Lenham and Staplehurst

Our first activity has been set up in Staplehurst; we meet for home-made cake and refreshments in the McCabe Centre every Monday, from 2 'til 4. We have plenty of activities; a raffle, bingo, a quiz, chair based exercise, etc. All we ask for is a donation of £1 — you can also buy raffle tickets for £1. If you or anyone you know needs some extra support in either Lenham or Staplehurst with dog walking, befriending, transport, etc. please get in touch on

01622 753618

Regards, Sinéad McQuillan.
Community Hub Co-ordinator.

Do you care for someone with LEARNING DISABILITIES and feel that their choices and voices are not being listened to??



We can support people to find their voice and speak up to achieve positive changes in their lives. Referrals can be made by themselves or anyone in contact with the person requiring support as long as that person is aware that advocacy is being requested for them.

We make sure that people can speak up for themselves regarding various specific issues and these may include issues such as accommodation, care, legal, finance, family and health matters.

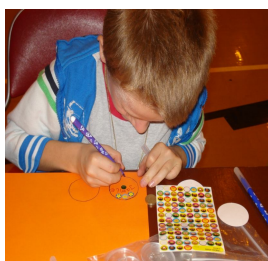
The key role of our advocates is to ensure that the person understands the options and choices which may be available to them and that that these choices are taken forward to give them a real quality of life.

We are a confidential and independent support service. Our advocates are specialized in using communication tools to work in a one to one advocacy partnership with varying levels of learning disabilities

If you know of anyone who would benefit from our support please contact us by telephone **020 3355 7141** or email kent@voiceability.org for a referral form.

Aiming High

SHORT BREAKS FOR DISABLED AND SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN & THEIR FAMILIES



May/June 2011 Programme

Tue 31st May	VSU Child Activity Day (8-12years) Including Bowling trip
Wed 1st June	DMAX Multi Sport Session <u>Now from 6 years</u>
Thu 2nd June	Pre School Session (0-5years) (Family Event)
Fri 3rd June	VSU Child Activity Day(13-18years) Including Bowling trip
Sat 4th June	Whole Family Coach trip to ZSL London Zoo

If you would like an application form to register your interest contact: **VAM c/o Josephine Cousins on 01622 663637** (or leave a message on answer phone) or by email at psg.bowergrove@btinternet.com

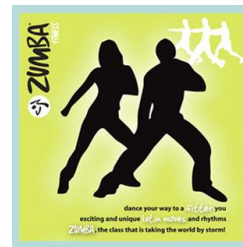


is the lead agent for this programme, commissioned by Kent County Council.

The Zumba group has moved to an exciting new venue!

Thanks to the generosity of the Liquid Nightclub in Lockmeadow we can now enjoy dancing in luxury with a great atmosphere and sound system. Zumba incorporates various Latin American dances with additional exercise movements. It's fast, it's fun and will tone up those muscles as well as lifting the spirits! **If you like the idea but are a bit hesitant come along to our demo session during Carers Week on Thu 16 June or join us next week!**

Every Thursday afternoon from 3-4pm call Christine 685276



Walking Group

Would you like to take some exercise, meet friendly people and see more of the countryside? Have a picnic, lunch in a pub or café and a chat and some laughter? If so then come and join Maidstone and Malling Carers Project Walking Group. The group meets on the last Monday of the month in the morning and goes on different walks around the countryside of Maidstone, after the walk there is the opportunity to have a picnic together if the weather is fine or lunch in a pub or café. This year so far we have walked around Loose, Vinters Valley Nature Reserve, Mote Park and Bearsted. Please don't worry if you don't know anybody else you will be made very welcome.

Please contact **Jane Thomas** on **01622 685276** or by email at jane.thomas@vam-online.org.uk for further information, I will be very pleased to hear from you.

The Book Club This group meets once a month at Maidstone Community Support Centre from 10 - 11.30am and would welcome new members. Last month's book review: **Inheritance by Nicholas Shakespeare**

"Andy Larkham is late. He is due at the funeral of his favourite school teacher, who once told him: "its hard work being anyone". Its especially hard for Andy – stuck in a dead-end job, terminally short of cash and with a fiancé who is about to ditch him. When the funeral leads to unexpected consequences Andy has to ask himself: how far will he go to change his life." This author was new to all of us as a writer of fiction. One member described it as fantastic; so much so that she read it in one go and paid the price with a sore back! Others found it boring or far-fetched. We all agreed that there was a heck of a lot going on with several stories layered through the book and while that appealed to some, it made it hard work for others. As usual we had really helpful insights from our members – an understanding of the potential and practicalities of mining iron ore in Australia, an explanation of where Armenia was in the world and a knowledge of the real-life philosophers whose works were 'discussed' by one of the characters who was a publisher of self-help books. We each gave the book a score out of 10. There were 2 x 9s and one 10. The average comes to 7.66!

Bridget Overton 10 May 2011

Check out their extensive book list on our website www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject.asp Next meeting - **14 June**

Swimming Group at the Living Well Fitness Centre

The group meets on Tuesday mornings from 10.20 at The Hilton Hotel in Maidstone. After a workout or a swim, relax in the steam room, sauna or jacuzzi and finish off with a chat over coffee in the hotel lounge! Ring Christine if you would like to join this friendly and supportive group. Ring Christine on 01622 685276



Floristry Class - carers recently enjoyed 4 weekly sessions with florist Jackie in association with Leisure Learning at the Maidstone Community Support Centre. If you are interested in a class for Christmas arrangements let Christine know a.s.a.p so we can book it.

Art Group

The carers art group meets on the first Monday of the month from 1.30-3.30. Bring along your own materials and anything you want to work on. Set aside a couple of hours for yourself each month to have peace and quiet and to be 'creative'. If you would like to come along to the next session on 06 June, ring Christine on 01622 685276.

Knit & Stitch Group

Enough carers responded to our proposal in the last newsletter to set this new group up along the same lines as the Art Group. You just bring along anything you are working on whether it is embroidery, knitting, patchwork or just some mending to do while you have a chat and a cup of tea. You don't have to be *GOOD* at it you just need to *ENJOY IT!* It will be on the 2nd Tuesday in each month beginning 14 June - ring Christine or just come along.

Carers Week outing and picnic at Walmer

As we mentioned in our last newsletter we are joining carer support groups in East Kent this year on a carers picnic to Walmer on Saturday 18 June. There will be a tea tent, therapy tent, KMFM, live music and local entertainment. Although we have filled up the seats on two minibuses now, if you have your own transport and would like to join us, we shall be at Walmer Green, The Strand, Walmer - next to Deal Castle - from 11.30 - 3pm. Bring along a picnic and we suggest you bring some folding camping seats if you have them or a rug to sit on. You will be able to park on the green where marshals will guide you. Let's hope for a warm sunny day! **If you need to contact us on the day of the trip ring 07507 015452.**



ALL THE ABOVE ACTIVITY GROUPS ARE FREE TO CARERS

WE CAN ONLY FUND THEM THANKS TO DONATIONS RECEIVED FROM TRUSTS, CARERS, AND FUNDRAISING EFFORTS FROM GROUPS, CLUBS AND BUSINESSES. OUR MOST GRATEFUL THANKS TO ALL THOSE THAT HAVE SUPPORTED US THIS YEAR.

Donations to the activities fund should be made to:
Voluntary Action Maidstone marked for **Maidstone & Malling Carers Project**
 (Registered Charity No.1066911)

Please consider making a donation instead of funeral flowers help us to continue to offer carers respite activities.

Diary of a jazz singer



My family consists of my husband Graham who suffers from Multiple Sclerosis and is a wheelchair user, and our two very artistic children David, age 20 who has Aspergers Syndrome and Anna, age 16 who suffers from CFS/MEand a mad dog called Merlin!

Monday

I woke up early and excited as we plan to go to a May Fayre. Graham was not feeling too good with yet another of his bad headaches but after helping him shower we had breakfast and set off at 11.30. We looked around the stalls and then heard 'Trad Jazz' and I couldn't believe it was the band I used to sing with, oh it was great to see everyone again and catch up! I was singing away and the next thing I had a microphone thrown at me and spent the next hour singing a few numbers. We had a great day and arrived home to find a letter of complaint from a neighbour about a loud humming noise from our house in the night disturbing her sleep. Well my heart sank after such a lovely day out - why does this happen? It seems you can never be happy. We are also having problems with our neighbour because of plans to build an extension for a bedroom/wetroom downstairs which has been going on for 3 years now. and we've just hit another hurdle which will increase the cost of the grant so whilst we're keeping positive we're having to think about a plan 'B' now just in case!

Tuesday

The alarm went off at 6.30, another disturbed night with Graham in and out of the bathroom. I found it very hard to sleep due to anxiety and sat up in bed and just stared into the air still worrying about next door. David had been up all night working on his art as he couldn't sleep, he was still in bed. Anna works from home by logging onto school work via her laptop. I was advised to have the boiler serviced and heating checked out as a possible cure for the noise and the plumber was able to come today. Graham

was not well so he was in bed, the plumber was all over the house and then at 11am an old school friend of David's turned up and David asked if Joe could stay the night. This happens a lot out of the blue, I run a B & B for David's friends - last weekend it was Jacob! Well the house was in a right mess with everything out of the wardrobe (piled on top of Graham) while I tried to track down this noise and emptied the downstairs cloakroom out to get at the boiler. The kitchen cupboard had to be cleared out to fix the tap plus Merlin barking and going mad! HELP! After walking the dog at 10pm, getting Graham to bed, making up a bed for Joe on the sofa I finally got to bed at 1am.

Wednesday

3am Graham was up for the loo, then at 4am and 5am. 6.30am the alarm goes off and I have to get Joe up for work. Graham woke with a bloodshot eye and still felt poorly so made a GP appointment for 4pm. 8.45am I went round to my friends to collect some ironing for her, as her husband is in hospital with Leukemia. Woke Anna up and helped Graham wash, dress and sorted his medication. I feel really worn out and very anxious today. I live on my nerves and have to be busy and active to cope with depression. Had a late night dash to Tesco for printer ink for the kids then Graham was hungry again. Walked Merlin 11.30 then David started his drumming. He can't use his drum kit because of disturbing the neighbours so is always tapping on hard surfaces around the house. So another very late night. Stop drumming David!!!
2am.



Thursday

Another disturbed night with Graham and Kathy and up at 6.30 to get David off to college. Usual chores, then wrote a letter to the neighbour and the council to say we've

had some work done to cure the noise. Had a call from the OT who wanted to come today about the extension. Oh blow, I'll miss my carers Zumba class, the highlight of my week and we'll be moving to the nightclub next



week - wonderful! Since last summer I've been doing Zumba and going to weight watchers and I have lost 2½ stone (size 20 down to 14). Normally on Thursdays I go to

Zumba, go home to do tea and then off to weight watchers and catch up with friends there but tonight I feel so anxious, tired and sick I just can't face seeing anyone. David was hyper tonight too and eventually he took Merlin for a walk at 1am then he and Anna chatted until 2am. I got to sleep around 3am then the usual routine with Graham started but not as bad as last night.

Friday

Another early start to get David off to college at 7.20am and Graham to his disabled club. Anna's friend Patsy turned up this afternoon and stayed for tea. Her mum rang to tell her that her dad was very ill and was rushed to

hospital. I made up a bed on the sofa for Patsy who also suffers from ME. Went for a good walk with Merlin at 11.30pm.

Saturday

Anna and Patsy had been up most of the night so they slept in. Patsy's mum rang to say her dad passed away during the night and she would pick her up at lunchtime to break the news to her. We all tried to watch TV in the evening but David was going very high so he took Merlin for a long walk.

Sunday

Believe it or not we were able to have a little lie-in. Graham was feeling very weak but I did get him out in the garden in the wheelchair for a little while and we had a fairly uneventful day until David started his drumming round the house and being very 'vocal'. Oh and his friend rang up and announced he might be coming to stay for a week - here we go again...



..Hannah

Free Admission

Family Fun Day

Plus:

- Stocks
- Coconut Shy
- Bouncy Castles
- Penalty Shoot Out
- Bungee Run
- Tombola
- Lucky Dip
- Face Painting
- Treasure Hunt with Cash Prize
- Roll the Penny

Raffle with fantastic prizes

Sports activities for kids of all ages!

BBQ and refreshments

Saturday 11 June 12 noon
sports field KFRS HQ, The Godlands
Straw Mill Hill, Tovil, Maidstone ME15 6XB

Contact Carole Brown (control) on 01622 892 121 or Alan Brown (Red Watch, Strood) for more details

MAIDSTONE YMCA Sports and Community Centre

Disability Sessions

- Monday - **Indoor Cricket** - 2pm to 3pm
(Session will run Friday 2:30pm - 3:30pm until 17th June)
- Tuesday - **Trampolining** - 12:45 to 1:45pm
- Wednesday - **Disco Dancing** - 1:30pm to 2:30pm
- Thursday - **Football** - 1pm to 2pm
- Friday - **Netball** - 1:30pm to 2:30pm

£3 per Session

18/05/2011

All proceeds in loving memory of Charlotte Brown to



Maidstone & Malling Carers Forum

Summary of notes from Wed 16 March 2011

Topic: Short Breaks

Attended by: 35 carers, 3 Maidstone and Malling Carers Project staff, and 5 Panel members

Panel:

Anna Ramsay – Senior Practitioner Assessment & Enablement Team KCC

Sharon Neville – Crossroads Care

Naomi Hill – Policy Lead for Carers KCC

Shirley Leigh & Tina Smith – Kent Adult Placement Scheme

Shirley Leigh and Tina Smith of the Kent Adult Placement Scheme

The scheme had been running for 20 years. The scheme places vulnerable adults in an approved family home in a similar way to the fostering scheme for children. The approved paid carer undertakes extensive training and is carefully matched with the adult, working closely with KCC Case Managers, followed by ongoing monitoring of the placement. A number of visits to the host family would be made before actually staying with them. This type of placement suits those who would feel happier in a family type environment rather than residential care and who have the potential to develop and learn skills for more independent living. Placements can also provide short breaks to adults in a family setting for weekends, holidays or longer term if the carer has to go in hospital, providing a family is available to accommodate them. The scheme mostly caters for those with learning disabilities although they can cater for all groups, including those with physical disabilities, providing that mobility equipment is not an issue. They can accommodate older people for short breaks and have incorporated a number of small registered homes for those with mental health problems. The matching process is very important and can take as long as necessary to make sure everyone is comfortable with the arrangement. They prefer not to offer emergency placements, but will do so if they know the person well. People can access the service via Social Services Teams.

Q. *How do you promote your service? It would have been ideal for my daughter but it was never suggested to us.*

A. We are not advertising at present due to uncertain finances. We rely on the Case Managers to pass on the information to the people they are working with. We try to attend District Partnership Meetings and may be need to make it more of a priority.

Q. *Who actually pays for the service?*

A. The service user pays a contribution following a financial assessment.

Sharon Neville - Crossroads

1. Their core service was to provide 2½ - 3 hours free care with trained support workers (15 month waiting list)
2. The option to 'buy in' the service until at the top of the waiting list and use of Direct Payments
3. Palliative service currently funding by the PCT (future uncertain)
4. Young carers support [also with waiting list and uncertain future funding]

Crossroads take great care to match the support worker to the family as it was so important carers know the person they care for is in safe hands. The support workers receive extensive training similar to auxiliary nurses. Carers can have a short break with the same support worker visiting at the same time each week. The charge to buy in the service is £12.89 per hour which can be purchased through a Direct Payment [following assessment from KCC].

Q. *Is the waiting list so long due to shortage of staff and is it necessary for the workers to be car drivers?*

A. A car is necessary as the person being cared for could be taken out, perhaps to Notcutts, shopping or just a coffee somewhere. The long waiting list was due to funding constraints not shortage of staff.

Naomi Hill – KCC Carers Policy Officer

Naomi was writing a new policy recognizing the need for short breaks for carers for:

1. GP & hospital appointments
2. Emergency & crisis care
3. Planned and organized short breaks to enable te carer to have a rest

Some of the issues were raised by carers were;

- The shortage of placements
- The funding for an assessed need for 4 week breaks a year for carers
- Lack of communication between case managers and service providers
- People funding their own care feeling unsupported by case managers
- Carers needing an assessment in order to receive a break

Q *If a carer has to go to hospital for treatment or appointments should this have to come out of the 4- weeks annual respite agreed? I had to go to several funerals last year which came out of my allocated respite days. I wouldn't call going to a funeral a respite break!*

Q *I had to go to 2 funerals in a fortnight. I rang Crossroads and KASS but was told my son could not go into respite because there was not time for an assessment.*

A. We are still in consultation. Care should be provided to match need in spite of cost and decisions about who pays is causing delay.

Statement; If there is a clear need for a break, there should not be a delay because of waiting for a carers assessment.

A. It has been decided that assessments will be carried out by the voluntary sector in future on behalf of KCC. We are looking at ways of commissioning services such as crisis support and trying to make services easier to access.

Statement; Carers of people with dementia have difficulty in accessing short breaks due to lack of placements.

A. We need to look at commissioning to improve provision.

Q. *My son went into hospital following a fall. The consultant said he was able to go home without care being organized so I insisted he wasn't going home until a care package was in place!*

A. It seems that you do have to know your rights and have to fight for them

Q. *Can you ask for an assessment before being discharged from hospital? I had to put my foot down to insist on an assessment after 9 days in hospital.*

A. You have every right to ask for an assessment under the law. We are putting changes in place to bring about a change in culture. We will have a central helpline number for carers and we will have publicity and posters advertising the helpline. We are looking at A & E being the place of entry where carers should be picked up by the carer assessment workers and then followed through their stay in hospital. There could be a provisional support plan and recommendations made as a result of that. We are investing in a new computer system where the recommendations would go straight to KASS. Also if the person was already known to KASS it would automatically flag up the need for assessment.

Next Forum: Weds 15 June 2011—10am - 12.30

Venue: Grange Moor Hotel, St Michael's Road, Maidstone

Topic: Finances

Are You Concerned About Long Term Care?

A message from Mick and Jean Green

I want to tell people about something my husband and I have had some concerns about for some time. Multiple Sclerosis struck my husband many years ago and with the support of our family we have managed to make our lives as comfortable as possible and make ends meet, just. But we always knew that one day things may not be so manageable.

We found out recently that should anything happen to either of us and we needed to go into long term care the rules of the government mean we may have to fund the cost of this ourselves. We later found out that if we had a property or savings which had £23,000 or more in value we would have to fund the entire cost of care home fees. In fact we **had** heard of someone that was forced to sell the home they had lived in for many years just to pay the care home fees as they would not get any financial help. They were forced by the government rules and there was nothing that could be done about it.

This really had us concerned that our family home, our planned inheritance for our children and grand children would be wiped out as we needed to pay for these costs without any choice. Now I have always been the world's worse at doing things later or putting things off until tomorrow but we realised that this was something that should not be ignored and couldn't be put off any longer.

Well, our story has a good ending. Our son, Lee is a financial adviser and he has managed to protect our home from the clutches of the government by using simple planning methods of a new Will and a Family Trust. When you consider that the average annual cost for residential care is over £25,500, how long would it take to use up all of your savings and the value in your home! The cost of the planning was a very small price to pay. Now we have the peace of mind that our home will always be protected and our children and grandchildren will one day inherit what we have worked so hard to achieve over the years.

If anyone has concerns about long term care costs and protecting their home, it's important you seek advice or it may be too late when you need that protection. You can always speak to me or my husband Mick and we can explain what we did.

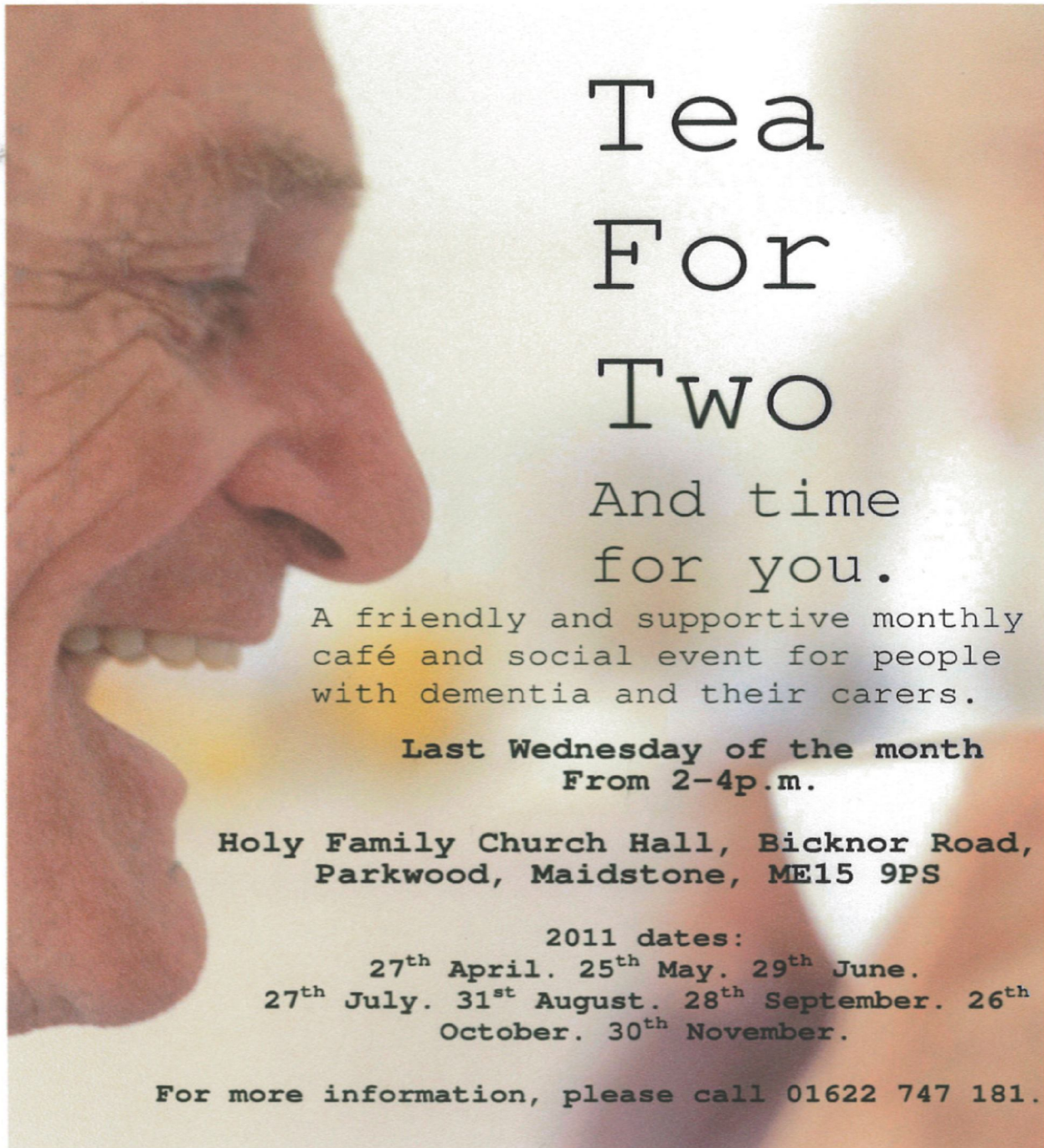
Our number is **01622 690994**

Jean and Mick

We always welcome the contributions made to this newsletter by carers

We can make changes that will protect anonymity for carers contributing a 'carers diary'

Any opinions or suggestions made by carers are not necessarily the opinion or advice of Maidstone and Malling Carers Project.



Tea For Two

And time
for you.

A friendly and supportive monthly café and social event for people with dementia and their carers.

**Last Wednesday of the month
From 2-4p.m.**

**Holy Family Church Hall, Bicknor Road,
Parkwood, Maidstone, ME15 9PS**

2011 dates:

27th April. 25th May. 29th June.
27th July. 31st August. 28th September. 26th
October. 30th November.

For more information, please call 01622 747 181.

Registered charity no. 296645

Kent Autistic Trust Social Skills Group

Do you care for someone with Asperger Syndrome who would be interested in joining a small social skills group in Maidstone?

**To find out more ring Des Walker: 01634 405168 or email:
dwalker@kentautistic.com**

Diary Dates

Check on our website for future dates
www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject.asp

Mondays	Maidstone District Partnership POP-IN - for people with a learning disability and carers - Tel: Jenny 07732 609 540	1 - 4
Mondays (fortnightly)	Support Group for carers affected by people misusing alcohol or drugs. Meet alternate mornings & evenings - Tel: Jane 01622 685276	10-12 or 6 - 8pm
Tuesdays	Swimming Group for Carers at the Living Well Fitness Centre Tel: Christine 01622 685276	10.30 -
Thursdays	Barbara (Carers Project) in Maidstone Gateway	10 - 2
Thursdays	ZUMBA Dancing for Carers - (a fusion of Latin American dance and exercise) Tel: Christine 01622 685276/230728	3 - 4
Mon 06 Jun	Support Group for carers affected by people misusing alcohol or drugs. Fortnightly (alternate mornings & evenings) Jane 685276	10-12
Mon 06 Jun	Carers Art Group meet on 1st Monday of each month - Maidstone Community Support Centre Tel: Christine	1.30-3.30
Tue 14 Jun	Carers Book Group meet on 2nd Tue of each month - Maidstone Community Support Centre Tel: Christine	10-11.30
Tue 14 Jun	Carers Knit & Stitch Group - (2nd Tue of each month) Maidstone Community Support Centre Tel: Christine	1.30 - 3
Wed 15 Jun	Maidstone & Malling Carers Forum - Topic: Finance Grange Moor Hotel, Maidstone Tel: Barbara 01622 685276	10-12.30
Sat 18 Jun	Carers Week Outing to Walmer	10.30-4.30
Mon 20 Jun	Carers Support Group - (3rd Mon of each month) all carers at Maidstone Community Support Centre Tel: Barbara 01622 685276	1-2.30
Mon 20 Jun	Support Group for carers affected by people misusing alcohol or drugs -as above	6 - 8pm
Tue 21 Jun	Alzheimers Society Carers Group - carers of people with dementia at 1 Dairy Court Fairview Farm, Linton Road, Loose. Tel: 01622 747181 before attending	10-12
Mon 27 Jun	Carers Walking Group - (last Mon of each month) transport from Maidstone available Tel Jane 01622 685276 for details.	11.30 - 1
Tue 28 Jun	Mental Health Carers Support Group - Kingswood Centre, 180-186 Union Street Tel: Maureen 01622 685276	11-12.30
Wed 29 Jun	Family Carer Network (attached to Butterfly Club) Maidstone Community Support Centre Tel: Jenny 01622 609284	7.30-8.30pm
Wed 29 Jun	Learning Disability Carers Group - Maidstone Community Support Centre Tel: Barbara 01622 685276	1.30 - 3
Wed 29 Jun	Alzheimers Society 'Tea for Two' for people with dementia and their carers Tel: 01622 747181	2 - 4