

March 2010

Special points of interest:

New ChOPP Community Champion Award

The Role of a Community Engagement Worker

Send in your events and news. We look forward to hearing from you.

Inside this issue:

Community Champion Award **1**

Role of Community Engagement Worker **2**

Cookery Roadshow at Wisborough Green **3**

News from Petworth Community Garden **4**

The Older People's Information Centre **5**

Dementia Café in Chichester **6**

West Dean Tea and Chat **6**

ChOPP — supporting 66 parishes from Plaistow in the north to Selsey in the south

Chichester District Older People's Partnership (ChOPP)

The new ChOPP Community Champion Award

At the recent meeting of Chichester District Older People's Partnership (ChOPP), a number of partners took the opportunity to share their involvement with ChOPP, and to celebrate how partnership working had enabled them to make a difference to older people living in the Chichester District.

ChOPP also wished to express their gratitude to all of the groups and partners who work with older people in the area and presented a new Community Champion award to Michael Stephenson for his outstanding support for older people in a whole variety of settings.



Michael completed the University of Chichester course entitled 'Training Older People as Researchers' and has since used the skills he gained to identify and gather relevant information and statistics. He has been able to apply this learning to a diverse range of projects including preferred facilities and activities for a recently formed local youth forum,

services and activities for a proposed Patient Participation Group at a local GP surgery, the preparation of a 5 year village plan and also to assess the demand for allotments on local available land.

Michael has additionally constantly supported the ChOPP project in so many ways and is actively involved in helping and supporting many older people within his immediate neighbourhood.

In receiving his award, Michael said 'It was a very humbling surprise to be singled out for this award. I am one of the many people who have either set up or joined with existing voluntary projects. We have all developed skills during our working life, so come and join a good team of volunteers and put those skills to use for the benefit of your community. There is so much that needs to be done and can be done. Be positive, meet great people and have fun.'

New ChOPP promotional website cards



New promotional website cards have been launched by ChOPP keeping older people, and the groups that support them, involved and informed. The ChOPP website, www.chopp.org.uk is constantly updated with all the local news, events and information, as well as providing regular news of the work of the ChOPP team. The promotional cards are being circulated widely within libraries and Help Points but if any groups or organisations are able to distribute these cards, within locations routinely accessed by older people, the ChOPP team would welcome your support.



**Bev Tinson
(CEW)
reports
from the
north of the
Chichester
District**

The Role of a Community Engagement Worker (CEW)

As a Community Engagement Worker (CEW) supporting the older people's groups in the north of Chichester district, I find the rewards gained from working with such groups are heart-warming. No two groups are the same and with so many of them organised and run by volunteers, many aged 60 plus, the energy and enthusiasm from the members is extraordinary.

'I may have retired from work but I haven't retired from life'. This was the sentiment expressed to me by a resident in one of the retirement schemes I am working with in Wisborough Green.

My engagement with this group of residents started with a visit to the Tuesday Arts & Crafts group in September 2009, which has been running for 27 years. As a small sociable group at Wyatt House, it is open to the wider community, and enjoys craft activities including card making, knitting, tapestry and cross-stitch. At that time, the WSCC funded tutor was on the point of retirement after 15 years. However, this very valuable and sustainable activity was set to continue through the commitment of the members, with an existing member taking over the role of lead organiser.

Realising that this group did not need any help from me, or the Chichester & District Older People's Partnership (ChOPP), I spoke to Cathy, the Scheme Manager, about other potential activities and opportunities within the scheme. The use of a warm, cosy and comfortable communal lounge was a golden opportunity to invite the wider community and this was already happening in the Art Class, taught by one of the residents on a Monday.

Wyatt House welcomes residents from the wider community to participate in any of their activities. They already host a monthly Sunday Lunch during the winter months. Cathy welcomed working with me, and ChOPP, in setting up bi-monthly coffee afternoons and took up my suggestion of having a different visiting provider in each month i.e. DWP, Falls Prevention Team, IAG, 4SIGHT, Age Concern etc. These are now set up and promoted in the village of Wisborough Green.

I visited Wyatt House a few weeks later with Cas Phelps from the DWP Pension Service as Cathy was also interested in having a benefits/pension drop-in on a bi-monthly basis, which the wider community (age 60+) was welcome to attend. The first of these took place in November 2009 and Cas was able to help both residents from the scheme and the wider community and, since then, three people have received entitlement to Housing/Council Tax Benefit and Attendance Allowance.

On another visit, I introduced Susie Brown from the isolation Action Group (IAG) and she is now working with Cathy and has arranged an activities 'Day Out' for the residents and local community in March this year.

I told Cathy and the residents about the Cookery Roadshows that ChOPP is holding around the district in partnership with West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and Chichester District Council. The residents were very interested and subsequently hosted a Cookery Roadshow in Wyatt House in January. Sixteen people attended, from both the scheme and the wider community. Eight attendees have now signed up to the further One-to-One Cookery sessions.

At another of my visits, I met Reg who was interested in setting up a Short Mat Bowls Group in the village hall. Further discussion enabled me to introduce Reg to Paul, our Business Development Officer, and Gemma, our Fundraising

Officer. Within weeks, the Wisborough Green Short Mat Bowls Group was constituted and a funding bid has now been submitted to enable them to purchase their much needed equipment. Reg confirmed at the end of January that the group had now reached 22 members and, to meet demand, has been extended to a Wednesday evening, as well as a Monday afternoon.

I am now working with Wyatt House and its residents to support the introduction of a weekly Exercise Group. I have negotiated costs with a qualified health trainer and we are putting together a funding bid with Gemma, our Fundraising Officer. This will again be something for both the residents and wider community and will hopefully start in Wyatt House from April 2010.

Much of the work I have been doing with Wyatt House has needed support from my colleagues, and the wider ChOPP initiative. My role as a Community Engagement Worker is to act as the mediator, empowering groups to realise their aim, and providing the support needed to make it happen. Equally important has been the need to increase awareness of the range of services available for older people in the community. By building upon the work of a new group or initiative, I have been able to widen the older person's access to information, support and activities, which goes a long way to promoting good health and social inclusion.

Engaging with a retirement scheme, especially one that is receptive to including the wider community, can be very rewarding because the needs of individual residents opens up opportunities to form new groups that everyone can benefit from. *Bev Tinson, Community Engagement Worker (Chi North)*

Cookery Roadshow goes to Wisborough Green

Chichester District Older People's Partnership (ChOPP) in partnership with West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and Chichester District Council has now held three Cookery Roadshows and is grateful to Marriott Lodge (Barchester Homes) and Lacy House (HydeMarlet) for hosting the first two.



The third and more recent Roadshow was hosted by Wyatt House, (Home Prime), in Wisborough Green and was also supported by WSCC Love Food, Hate Waste and Sainsbury.

Having identified a need for a more innovative approach to support older people interested in finding out more about cooking, the potential was realised to link safety in the kitchen, with improving cookery skills, for those over 55 years.

Led by a chef, serving as a Firefighter with West Sussex Fire and Rescue, an enjoyable afternoon was spent demonstrating an easily prepared and healthy meal, whilst embedding safety messages, in addition to general cookery tips. Penny Line from the Love Food, Hate Waste project worked alongside the chef to convey fire safety messages and share tips on reducing food waste. The food was sponsored by Sainsbury on each occasion.

Feedback from these events has been overwhelmingly positive and, in response, a number of smaller, supported, free cookery sessions are being held for those interested. These are particularly aimed at those new to cooking, potentially resulting from assuming a caring role, or perhaps through bereavement and needing to cook for one. For further information or if you are interested in joining the 'cooking for one' sessions, or would like the Roadshow to visit your area, contact the ChOPP Office on 01243 528460.



**Cookery
Roadshow
goes to
Wisborough
Green**

Grassroots Grants support Petworth Community Garden



The success and value of a local community garden project has been recognised by funding from Grassroots Grants. Through the support of Chichester District Older People's Partnership, Petworth Community Garden has been awarded £1,500 towards overhead costs, as well as running costs for next season's seeds and other requirements.

Petworth Community Garden was established in September 2005 by just a handful of volunteers. Taking on an overgrown double allotment, the group quickly transformed the land and organic fruit and vegetables were soon being grown. Before long, additional volunteers became involved and local people supported with donations of seeds, potatoes, a pond, a greenhouse, and many other essential items.



News from Petworth Community Garden



The group works with people of all ages and abilities and includes members with learning difficulties, physical difficulties, older people and others with limited means, along with local people. Each member's skills and abilities are recognised and the tasks around the garden are easily shared according to individual's needs, with no gardening experience necessary. The group meets every Tuesday from 10am to 2pm, not only sharing gardening tasks, but also tea, cakes and seasonal soup. Each member additionally takes home free, fresh organic fruit and vegetables, with recipe ideas and information.

The garden is maintained organically and sustainably, encouraging wildlife and beneficial insects, using natural and biological pest controls. It also has a thriving pond. The wheelchair access area is currently being developed and already has accessible paths and raised beds, with additional funding soon to support the provision of a wheelchair accessible compost toilet. A website has recently been developed by a volunteer and provides more information at: www.petworthcommunitygarden.org.uk. Further details can also be obtained by email from: petworthcommunitygarden@hotmail.com or phone on 07717 462780.

Recognising the value of the project, Mary Carruthers, Grassroots Grants Manager, said 'This project is inspirational in its value to the community and we are pleased to be able to support its future sustainability and growth.'



Farewell to Sarah for the moment

As many of you are aware, Sarah Williams, our Network Administrator, has recently left on maternity leave. We will be welcoming her replacement very soon.

The Older People's Information Centre (TOPIC)

A new mobile information service for older people, and the groups that support them, has been established through partnership working across five statutory and voluntary services in the Chichester District.

Following on from a successful three month pilot project in East Wittering, the service will be rolled out across rural communities in the coming months. Advice and signposting support will be available from West Sussex Fire and Rescue, Chichester District Older People's Partnership (ChOPP), the Department of Work and Pensions, Chichester Community Partnership Team and Action in Rural Sussex.

The Older People's Information Centre (TOPIC) will be visiting the following rural communities in the coming months on:

- Thursday 15th April at South Harting Village Hall from 2 – 4pm,
- Thursday 13th May at Sandham Memorial Hall, Coldwaltham from 10am – 1pm
- Wednesday 26th May at Lurgashall Village Hall from 3 – 5pm
- Wednesday 9th June at Hampers Green Community Centre from 2 – 4pm
- Wednesday 16th June at Singleton Village Hall from 10am – 3pm

Further venues will be confirmed soon.

TOPIC will be available with no appointment necessary and free refreshments will be provided. Further information can be obtained from Derek Covill on 07921 291170.

Action for the Older Voice (AOV)

Through its consultation with older people in a number of areas across the District, Chichester District Older People's Partnership (ChOPP) has established a need to provide a common branding for older people's reference groups, making them easily recognisable and accessible to all.

Action for the Older Voice has now been established as the brand name for older people's reference groups being established across the District. Although each group will have its own identity and constitution, the brand name will reflect their overall common purpose in consulting, supporting and representing the voice of older people.



Action for the
Older Voice

ChOPP's work with existing reference groups, such as the Chichester Senior Forum and Headlight, has helped support initiatives that reflect the needs of older people. These have included discussions with transport providers, specifically Stagecoach, with ongoing work to promote accessibility, particularly in the rural areas. Existing reference groups are involved in discussion regarding accessible seating for older people in both Midhurst and Chichester town centres, and in promoting Park and Ride opportunities for Chichester.

ChOPP continues to welcome contact from older people's groups and individuals, from across the area, interested in discussing and addressing issues within their local communities that affect their daily lives. For further details, contact the ChOPP team on 01243 528460.

**Find out
about:
The Older
People's
Information
Centre
(TOPIC)**

and

**Action for
the Older
Voice
(AOV)**

Dementia Cafes in Chichester and Bognor Regis

In response to the National Dementia Strategy, 'Living well with Dementia', Chichester District Older People's Partnership (ChOPP) has been working closely with a wide range of partners across Bognor Regis and Chichester to improve services available to support carers and those coping with dementia. With an elderly population which exceeds national averages, and which is scheduled to rise considerably, this has proved to be an important area of work to focus on.

'Our cafe' is a pilot partnership project, led by MIND, to set up two cafes (one in Bognor Regis and one in Chichester), for the sole use of carers and their cared for, who are coping with dementia. Whilst offering the opportunity for carers to meet on a weekly basis and gain mutual support, it is hoped that this service will go some way to de-stigmatising the condition and to reducing the social isolation that it brings. We aim to provide a safe, informal environment where people can have a drink and a snack, and participate in both structured and spontaneous activities.

The cafe will be run by a Project Organiser, two support staff and trained volunteers. They will be able to offer professional advice within a confidential setting, as well as providing group and individual support, and access to relevant information, particularly for carers.

It is hoped that carers will be able to become actively involved in telling us how they would like the cafe run and, whilst offering a more relaxed opportunity to socialise, we would like to encourage the attendees to become involved in creating a programme of activities and speakers that they consider may be of help to them. We are keen to see this service as enabling members to feel more comfortable in using public cafes and facilities, with the aim of developing confidence to socialise in the wider community and eventually become independent of the service.

'Our Café' plans to open on 12th April at St George's Hall, Chichester. Please contact us on 01243 528460 for more details, or if you have experience of working with people with dementia and/or would like to find out more about becoming a volunteer.

West Dean Tea and Chat



With the support of Chichester and District Older People's Partnership (ChOPP) the West Dean Tea and Chat group has now been established to welcome retired estate workers from West Dean, as well as older members of West Dean Parish and community. Come and find out more and let us know the kind of activities and opportunities that would benefit you and your community.

The group meets at West Dean Gardens Restaurant on alternate Mondays from 10.30am - 12 noon, apart from Bank Holidays. The meetings for the next three months will be on 8th and 22nd March, 12th and 26th April and 10th and 24th May. For further information and to confirm any future diary dates, contact Mrs Myrtle Gray on 01243 672264 or Mrs Barbara Boxall on 01243 839785.

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Check out the website!

www.chopp.org.uk

