

Senior Citizens Forum Newsletter June 2020

Message from the Chairperson, Celia Steventon

Hello again, what a really unusual spring we have had this year, surely the hottest on record and of course, the lockdown due to the Covid-19 virus. I hope you have stayed safe and well.

We have all found ways of communicating with friends and family, email, WhatsApp, Zoom meetings and even reverting to letter writing. I do miss letter writing and receiving letters from family and friends not the bank!

We're keeping you up to date with news by way of magazines, news updates, website and social media, which I hope you have found useful. We also offer a telephone service if you need any more help or just someone to chat to. I'd like to thank all our amazing volunteers who have been working hard to support people through this challenging period.

We have no idea when we will be able to start our events and activities, but as I write this the lockdown is slowly easing, so watch this space.

Meanwhile stay safe and alert and hope to see you soon.

What's new in June

Lockdown easing

If you are in the "shielding" category, which is people who are extremely clinically vulnerable, you are now able to go out for a walk, if you feel comfortable, with members of your household or meet up with one other person not in your household, in a garden or open space, provided you maintain a 2 metre distance. However, you may wish to continue avoiding all contact until a later date.

If you are not classed as extremely clinically vulnerable, you can meet five other people at any one time, as long as it is in an outdoor space and social distancing is maintained. That means any two people from different households must stay two metres apart, though any groupings who live in the same house don't need to socially distance from each other. This includes people over 70, as long as they take extra care with social distancing, handwashing and touching hard surfaces.

Government lists

Some people with cancer, liver disease or severe asthma have been dropped from the UK government's coronavirus shielding list by text message and being told they'll no longer receive food parcels. Complaints have been made and it seems these texts shouldn't have gone out before their doctors have been able to speak to them. If you do receive a text, continue to shield until you have received direct advice from your own doctor.

NHS Test & Trace

People who have been in close contact with someone found to have Covid-19 are now being traced. Anyone in England with coronavirus symptoms can now get a test and if it's positive you'll be contacted by text, email or phone. You'll be asked about places you have visited recently and details of people you have been in close contact with in the 48 hours before your symptoms started. The NHS contact tracers will ask people they get in touch with to self-isolate for a fortnight.

Please be aware that as things are changing day by day, by the time this magazine reaches you, some of the information be out of date.

Scam Update - NHS Test & Trace scams

People are being warned to be wary of scammers pretending to be from the NHS Test & Trace service as coronavirus contact tracing launches in the UK. It's feared fraudsters will pose as NHS contact tracers to con people into handing over personal details.

To check it's genuine - calls and texts will come from one verified NHS number: 0300 013 5000. Calls from any other numbers, or from a withheld number, should be treated as fake. If you do not feel comfortable talking on the phone, or suspect the call to be a scam, you can ask for an email or a text that will invite you to use the Test and Trace website instead. From this email, you should only ever be directed to this web address:
contact-tracing.phe.gov.uk

Real contact tracers will NEVER do any of the following:

- Ask you for details of card or bank account numbers
- Ask you to provide or fill in social media login details
- Ask you to set up a pin
- Ask you to download anything

If you've received a dodgy message or call you can report it to Action Fraud, the national fraud reporting centre working with the police.

Action Fraud 0300 123 2040

Self-isolation doesn't mean having to manage alone

Are you are struggling and need some help? Are you feeling anxious and alone?

Telford Senior Citizens Forum is offering telephone support.
(Email and messaging support available too)

We have a team of friendly volunteers ready and very willing to contact you by phone on a regular basis to chat and check that you're coping OK.

In the current situation it's very easy to feel anxious and unsettled. The daily news can add to our anxiety, along with concerns about getting the shopping and medications we need. We might feel OK some of the time, but have other days when it all seems too hard to cope with.

Many of us will be coping alone without regular contact. Some will be coping OK but feeling a bit lonely and isolated, missing normal activities and being able to spend time with family and friends.

Whatever your need, we can help.

Call us on 07932 828333 or 07552 975676 email: enquiries@twseniors.org.uk
Mon - Fri, 10am - 4pm (leave a message outside of these hours)

Can you help?

Would you be willing to be one of our telephone befrienders? Could you spend some time every week supporting others with a friendly phone call?

We might not need everyone who offers their help, but if demand becomes high, we want to be able to offer the support that people need.

If you'd like to help, please call Chris 07932 828333 or Wendy 07552 975676 or email enquiries@twseniors.org.uk to find out more.

Other sources of help

Telford & Wrekin Council

Community Support Team on 01952 382030.

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin

Telephone support and help with delivering groceries and medications.

Call 01743 233123, Mon - Fri, 10am - 4pm.

Telford Churches

Support with food parcels, prescriptions, dog walking, telephone chats. Call Sharon on 01952 505108.

Citizens Advice Telford & Wrekin

General advice, tel 01952 567193

Food parcels, tel 01952 567174

Need help with your computer, tablet or smartphone?

Stuck and unable to sort out the problem? Or perhaps you need guidance about how to connect to your family and friends, share photos or use the internet.

Forum volunteers can help by phone or email.

07932 828333/07552 975676 enquiries@twseniors.org.uk

What to do if you have symptoms

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

Call 111 or use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do if you have:

a high temperature

a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

a sudden loss of taste or smell

or you're not sure

Urgent dental care during the lockdown

Although it might be OK to postpone your regular check-up, dental emergencies happen and are too painful to ignore. So what should you do and what constitutes a dental emergency? Neil Banton, head of clinical services at Bupa Dental Care, explains.

"If you have a dental emergency you should contact your local practice. Most practices are still offering telephone triage so you can be assessed while still at home, and then your dentist will provide advice accordingly.

Emergencies requiring urgent treatment include:

Any type of facial swelling.

Excruciating pain causing a lack of sleep or concentration.

Mouth ulcers which haven't healed after two weeks.

Continuous bleeding after tooth extraction.

A broken tooth causing unmanageable pain and damage to the cheek or tongue.

People experiencing any of these symptoms should contact their local practice or 111 as soon as possible.

"Following the consultation with the dentist, if a patient has an urgent need for emergency treatment, the dentist will advise on the best course of action. This may be further advice, the provision of a prescription or referral to an Urgent Dental Centre." NHS England is in the process of setting up Urgent Dental Centres to accommodate dental emergencies during the COVID-19 crisis.

Toothache

The most common dental problem people experience is toothache, Banton explains. Luckily, over the counter painkillers can help ease your discomfort.

"Reduce sugary or acidic foods, especially sweets or fizzy drinks - even diet ones - as these can aggravate the pain. It's also important to avoid extremes of temperatures, such as hot drinks and very cold foods."

Keeping your head elevated at night can also help, as can applying a cool pack or a packet of frozen vegetables wrapped in a towel to your cheek, to keep the area cold and take down any inflammation.

You can also ring 111 for advice about getting urgent dental care.

Getting supermarket delivery slots

Ordering your groceries online or by phone and having them delivered to your door seems the ideal solution for getting our shopping without having to leave the house. However, as demand is so high, many have found it difficult to book available delivery slots.

So what can you do?

1. Register as 'extremely vulnerable' on Gov.uk

If you have a medical condition that means you're classed as 'clinically extremely vulnerable', you may have already received a letter asking you to shield at home. If you haven't received a letter and you have one of the high-risk medical conditions you can register on Gov.uk or call your GP or hospital care team. You can sign up on behalf of someone else who falls into this category and isn't able to register themselves. You can check the NHS lists of high risk and moderate risk conditions on page 11.

2. Register with supermarkets for access to priority slots

The big supermarkets are trying to identify their most vulnerable customers and give them priority access to delivery slots. Some are only focusing on people on the high-risk list to do this, but others say you can register for priority slots if you've been missed off the list, or you're in the 'moderate-risk' category instead.

Sainsburys - if you aren't online you can call 0800 9178 557 to place an order over the phone and pay for your shopping with a debit or credit card when placing your order.

Iceland - Online orders have been limited to customers who are over state pension age, self-isolating and other vulnerable people.

Tesco - Call 0800 917 7359 and they will do their best to prioritise those that are more vulnerable.

Morrisons - Have a new dedicated telesales shopping service for the vulnerable and elderly. Call 0345 611 6111 and select option 5, and you can select from 47 essential items. Delivery should be made the following day and you can pay by card only, for the delivery on your doorstep.

Co-op - You can select products from a list of basic essentials. Contact your local store by phone.

Asda - Is only giving priority slots to those on the government's list.

Supermarket food boxes delivered to your door

The following stores are offering food boxes for the vulnerable, a good idea if you're running out of basics and can't get a delivery slot for while – Asda, Aldi, Home Bargains, Morrisons, M&S. They range from around £24 - £35, need to be ordered online.

Other options:

There are several local stores and outlets offering deliveries of groceries, fruit & veg etc and some pubs, restaurants and catering firms are offering delivery of hot and cold meals.

If you're struggling to pay you can request food parcels from Telford Crisis Support. Please call 01952 380400 (Telford and Wrekin Council) or 01952 567174 (Citizens Advice Telford and the Wrekin) to be referred.

Understanding the government lists

People at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable) who:

- have had an organ transplant
- are having chemotherapy or antibody treatment for cancer, including immunotherapy
- are having an intense course of radiotherapy (radical radiotherapy) for lung cancer
- are having targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system (such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors)
- have blood or bone marrow cancer (such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma)
- have had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant in the past 6 months, or are still taking immunosuppressant medicine
- have been told by a doctor they you have a severe lung condition (such as cystic fibrosis, severe asthma or severe COPD)
- have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID or sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes them much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids)
- Are pregnant with a serious heart condition

If you're at high risk from coronavirus, you should have received a letter from the NHS. Speak to your GP or hospital care team if you have not been contacted and think you should have been.

People at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable, who:

- are 70 or older
- are pregnant
- have a lung condition that's not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis)
- have heart disease (such as heart failure)
- have diabetes
- have chronic kidney disease
- have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
- have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy)
- have a condition that means they have a high risk of getting infections
- are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids)
- are very obese (a BMI of 40 or above)

If you're at moderate risk from coronavirus, it's very important you follow the advice on social distancing.

The following article is an advertisement:

Meals on Wheels service with safety a priority

Telford based Sofood have started a Meals on wheels service delivering microwavable tasty & nutritious meals that are freshly frozen and delivered to the doorstep. It's an established, reputable catering company, which, with the advent of social distancing, has changed its service to offer a range of chef-made nutritious meals available at a reasonable cost.

Meals are £5.00, including chicken Provençale, beef and ale pie or sausage and bean casserole, all served with a potato dish and fresh vegetables. Desserts are available at £2.50. The minimum order is £24.00 so 6 meals which can be kept in the freezer for up to 1 month. All meals are prepared by highly skilled local chefs Peter Roberts, who owned The Orchard restaurant in Newport and David Spalding, who was Executive Head Chef at Lilleshall National Sports Centre for 11 years.

Director Kris Lea said "It is vital to us to support our local community so we started providing the meals on wheels service as soon as we had the highest levels of health and safety systems in place, ensuring that our products are safe, and the storage and reheating guidelines are correct".

Orders can be made either online, by email or phone. Customers can choose a range of meals by visiting the website and clicking order online to view the shop. Special dietary requirements can also be accommodated.

Kris says "Sofood Is a family business which started as a diner on a trading estate providing something different - the pre-ordered take-away & delivery option was most popular for those dining 'al-desko' on their lunch breaks. Due to a growing reputation we began being approached by companies and now provide large scale corporate and private event catering. We've come a long way from me serving paninis!"

email: hi@sofood.co.uk

www.sofood.co.uk/chef-meals

tel: 01952 459945

Environment & Transport Action Group, by Dave Wright, ETAG Chair

Highways Agency

With fewer cars on the roads it seems strange that the Highways Agency have been reporting several motorways and A roads being closed due to accidents. The agency believes this is down to the speed drivers are doing on our nearly empty roads. We have always been told that speed is a killer however it seems that due to the lack of traffic on the road's drivers are forgetting this simple fact.

Driving Licences

Highways Agency

With fewer cars on the roads it seems strange that the Highways Agency has been reporting several major roads closed due to accidents. The agency believes this is down to the speed drivers are doing on our quiet roads. Although we know that speed is a killer, it seems that with the lack of traffic on the roads, drivers are forgetting this simple fact.

Driving Licences

We have been informed that the DVSA is facing delays in issuing driving licences to those who may have a medical condition. There is likely to be a significant delay before NHS clinicians and opticians are able to provide DVSA with the information needed to make a decision and issue a new licence.

If you have a current driving licence and have not been told by your doctor or optician that you should not drive, you are able to drive while DVSA is considering your application. All drivers must notify DVSA of the onset or worsening of a medical condition.

Renewal of photocard licences

To make it easier to update a photocard licence at the end of the 10 years validity, those that expire between 1 February and 31 August 2020 will be automatically extended for 7 months from the expiry date. Drivers do not need to take any action and will be sent a renewal reminder before their 7 month extension ends.

If you have already applied online to renew your photocard, this will be processed as normal. However, there will be a delay in processing a postal application, but the 7 month extension will apply in the meantime. This extension only applies to the photocard renewals that expire after 10 years.

MOTs

Your car, van or motorcycle's MOT expiry date will be extended by 6 months if it's due on or after 30 March 2020 – but you must keep your vehicle in a safe and roadworthy to drive. You can still tax your vehicle; your insurance will be valid and your vehicle's record will be updated.

The expiry date will be updated about 7 days before it was due to expire. 3 days before the expiry date, check it has been extended at www.gov.uk/check-mot-history. If it hasn't, you can email covid19mot@dvs.gov.uk quoting your reg number and expiry date.

If your vehicle's MOT expired on or before 29 March 2020, you must book your MOT as usual unless either:

- you or someone you live with has coronavirus symptoms
- you're extremely vulnerable from coronavirus

You must stay at home (self-isolate) if either of these situations apply - do not take your vehicle for its MOT.

If your vehicle tax and MOT run out this month

You cannot renew your vehicle tax until your MOT expiry date has been extended. This means you might need to wait until later in the month to tax your vehicle. Check that the MOT expiry date has been extended before you tax your vehicle, at www.gov.uk/check-mot-history

Keep your vehicle safe to drive

It can't be unsafe even if your MOT expiry date has been extended. Your MOT extension will no longer apply if you take your vehicle for its MOT and it fails. It will need to be fixed and pass its MOT before you can use it again.

Helping you to cope if you suffer from hearing loss or tinnitus

Signal offers practical help and support to around 100,000 people and their families across Shropshire, living with hearing loss. During the coronavirus pandemic, Signal is:

Working in partnership with Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils to ensure that Deaf British Sign Language users, who are self-isolating, are able to access the Council services for food and essentials delivery.

Helping to reduce isolation by making contact with Deaf BSL users via a weekly text and a follow up FaceTime call, where required.

Delivering online Tinnitus Support Groups via Zoom.

Delivering online Speaker Sessions for Tinnitus, on topics such as mindfulness, via Zoom.

Providing one-to-one support for people experiencing tinnitus who are going through a challenging time.

Writing letters to vulnerable tinnitus group members who do not have access to any other form of email, phone or video communication.

On request, providing support and advice for some Hard of Hearing Groups across Shropshire (including post-Covid 19 support).

On request, delivering virtual Deaf Awareness Education Training via video.

Email: info@signal.org.uk

tel 1743 358356, text 07950 782 819

Do you remember Corona Lemonade?

Corona means crown in Latin. The Coronavirus has been named due to its series of crown like spikes on the surface.

From the 1920s through to the end of the 1980s the sight and sound of the Corona pop man meant delight for thousands of children across the whole of Britain. It was a Welsh success story that remains an important part of the country's social history.

Corona drinks were for so many years, delivered to the doors of houses across the land, first by horse and cart and then by lorry. And it all began with a small factory in Porth at the foot of the Rhondda valleys, produced by the Corona Soft Drinks Company, a firm that had been created by two Rhondda grocers, William Evans and William Thomas.

The area at the time was full of coal mines and the pubs did a thriving business as men, after a day down the pit, were desperate to quench their thirst. As a result, drunkenness was rife. Evans and Thomas were determined to find an alternative drink, but sale of the fizzy drinks had little effect on drunkenness, so it was decided that the product should be sold, door to door. Over 200 salesmen, each driving a horse and cart, were soon operating across south Wales. They sold a wide range of drinks, starting with the original orangeade and then moving on to others such as limeade and cherryade, American cream soda and dandelion and burdock. The fizzy drinks had an immediate appeal for children who were soon drinking large quantities of the product. Parents soon learned that it was best to ration the distribution of the gassy liquid.

The company operated a system of 'money back on the bottle', thus ensuring that generations of school children would augment their pocket money by collecting discarded bottles and turning them in to shop and door to door sellers.

By the end of the 1930s over 170 million bottles of Corona pop were being produced each year - and most of it was sold door to door. The Corona company was bought out by the Beecham Group in 1958 and was transferred to Britvic in 1987. The Porth plant closed the same year. The fizzy drink continued to sell, and its advertising slogan "Every bubble's passed its FIZZICAL" was seen on television and chanted by children for many more years. With the advent of supermarkets, however, the need for delivery gradually dropped away. By the end of the 1980s, like the milk, bread and fish vans that had plied their trade around the streets for years, the Corona delivery man was soon a thing of the past.

Taken from www.bbc.co.uk/blogs

The following article is an advertisement:

Make sure everyone's dancing to your tune.

Book a free 20-minute Q&A session with our solicitors today to discuss Advance Decisions, Making a Will or Powers of Attorney.

Fodens Solicitors

fodens.co.uk

01952 726111

Don't stop moving!

Fortunately, there are many ways we can all keep up our strength and balance exercises while remaining indoors.

Mini-squats - Rest your hands on the back of the chair for stability and stand with your feet hip-width apart. Slowly bend your knees as far as is comfortable, keeping them facing forwards. Aim to get them over your big toe, keeping your back straight. Gently come up to standing, squeezing your buttocks as you do so. Repeat 5 times.

Sit-to-stand - Sit on the edge of the chair, feet hip-width apart. Lean slightly forwards. Stand up slowly using your legs, not arms. Keep looking forward and do not look down. Stand upright and then slowly sit down, bottom-first. Aim for 5 repetitions – the slower, the better.

Arm raises - Sit upright with your arms by your sides. With palms forwards, raise both arms out to the side and then up as far as is comfortable. Return to the starting position. Keep your shoulders down and arms straight. Breathe out as you raise your arms and breathe in as you lower them. Repeat 5 times.

Stay at home with the WEA, socialise with others and learn something new

The Workers' Educational Association is offering many of its courses online since the COVID-19 pandemic and for the foreseeable future.

Many of the courses are free for users, and for courses that cost money, some people could be eligible for a free place if they meet the eligibility criteria.

There are several courses available including crafts and arts, personal development, digital skills, culture and history, food and hygiene, English and Maths, health and wellbeing, finances and budgeting, and employability.

There are also free live activities to join in with and free tasters.

Explore what's available at www.wea.org.uk/online

A simple exercise for calming those panicky feelings

The 'pigeon breath' is a yoga technique aimed at opening the chest and developing control over your breathing. The focus on the movements and using different muscle groups helps to distract our minds from our worries.

Begin with your hands interlocked under your chin, look forward.

Breathe in through your nose and raise your elbows sideways as high as is comfortable, expanding your chest as you do.

Breathe out through your mouth in a slow steady stream, like gently blowing out a candle, while lowering your elbows towards each other and tilting your head back slightly. It's not essential for your elbows to meet. Allow your chin to point forwards and your eyes to look up. Do not force the head back.

Whilst holding the same position, breathe in through the nose.

Breathe out through the nose, bringing your head forward and elbows and hands back to their starting position.

Free virtual yoga sessions

The above exercise was suggested by Anne-Marie Davies, who is running FREE virtual yoga sessions every Tuesday, at either 5.00pm or 6.30pm.

It's simple to connect and exercises can be done by all abilities. Anne-Marie will suggest how you can adapt them if you suffer from, for example, a bad back or have knee problems.

If you'd like to take part, email: yogawithannemarie@gmail.com and Anne-Marie will explain how to connect to the session.

Ease yourself out of lockdown

Excerpt of an article written for the Guardian by Frances Ryan, no stranger to self-isolation due to a disability.

Suddenly, everyone is experiencing what those of us with chronic illness have long been familiar with: the urge to break out after being trapped inside for months – and the quiet nerves about doing it. It is

more than two years since I became largely housebound. I hate that word. "Housebound". As if you were an inanimate object, tied to the back gate.

As lockdown slowly eases, I have found myself thinking about what it is to leave the house after a long spell inside. The rest of the public will, in time, find themselves in a bizarre wonderland: visiting a friend's house again, getting on a train, sitting in a bar. These are the firsts that are not actually firsts, the new experiences you have had a thousand times before. It would be natural if you were feeling anxious. Isolation is hard going, but then so is escaping it.

When your body has denied you the chance to take the mundane excursions most people do every day, having that opportunity again feels electrifying. In the spring air, the blossom unfurling and lining the streets with pink. Wonder mixed with terror. There is a feeling, somewhere between walking through your front door and reaching Superdrug, when your brain wants to protect you from the outside world. You tell yourself you are going to die, possibly next to the shampoo. You are not, of course, and you breathe slowly, reminding yourself that you used to do this all the time. That you are fine. That you are actually great.

Established wisdom says not to take advice from someone in their pyjamas, but if I could offer any, it would be this. The thing that tends to keep you awake at night during these times is not what you miss, but the fear that you will never get it back. You almost certainly will. You will in time regain the precious things.

There is such happiness in that – in rediscovering the people and places we love. But it is not ungrateful if you feel some pressure or panic lurking at the thought of going back outside. It is kind to give yourself time to readjust. To go just half a mile from home at first. To start small. Savour the little details; ground yourself in the sights and sounds. The unfurling of the lilac. Your best friend's laugh.

If you still find yourself struggling, that's OK too. If you haven't been in a crowd since March, it is easy to be anxious – even more so if you're shielding and are now going out for the very first time.

Similarly, if you find those feelings dominating your mind and restricting your ability to get on, professional help is there. GPs are still the best start. Many therapists are now online, and some are even free.

People talk about a grand return to normal after lockdown but the truth is, "normal" is hard to re-find. Nothing is waiting for you exactly as you left it. And that is OK. Things change. Nothing is guaranteed. You adapt, perhaps even finding something better than before. "Home" is just a different way of living, no less because it is smaller. It is a thing to be valued, to perhaps see more kindly than before. But if – when – you do get back out in the world, it will be all the more beautiful from your time away. Lick an ice-cream on a bench, as the summer sun warms your skin. Memories go round on a loop, inviting us out once again.

Self-isolating getting you down?

I have heard from many who are struggling with self-isolating. Whilst they are aware it's necessary and potentially a life saver, their mood and mental health are suffering badly. With this in mind, I thought it might be helpful to share some ideas for keeping up our spirits in this time of national crisis.

Here are a few ideas:

Speak to family and friends regularly. Better still, video link them. You might want to think about linking up with an on-line group of friends.

Eat as healthily as you can, incorporating fresh vegetables and fruit in your daily diet. You may want to look at how you can experiment with cooking and maybe try out new recipes.

Exercise daily, go for a walk (social distancing of course) if you can't do this look on-line at an exercise regime you can do. You may also want to look at cycling if you have a bike. There is really no excuse, even whilst sitting in a chair you can exercise. Try to give yourself daily/weekly tasks.

Do some gardening if you have one, there are plenty of weeds this time of year.

Make a list of jobs around the house that you haven't had the time to do or have simply been putting off. Now is the time!

Do a jigsaw (if you haven't got one, a neighbour or a friend may have one you could borrow).

Look through your books and prioritise which ones you want to read first, perhaps making a list. You might even start or join an on-line book club.

Think about things you have wanted to do in a while, this might include learning a language, learning a new skill etc. This doesn't have to be expensive as you can You tube anything these days.

Make a list of DVDs' you might want to re-watch. If you are lucky enough to have streaming networks, make a 'favourites' list.

Look at volunteer agencies that might be able to use your skills. This obviously, will be at a distance and may include using your PC or telephone.

Avoid watching updates on the news or through social media if you are feeling anxious or particularly low in mood.

The above list is not exhaustive, but at least it might help to give you a few ideas to help pass the time. You never know, you may learn something! Stay safe and well.

Visit: www.smart-lifecoach.co.uk

Email: dianne.srsmart@gmail.com Tel: 07896 955 911

Switch on some music - it'll help lift your mood

It's long been said that music is mind medicine. Advances in neuroscience and brain imaging are now revealing this to be true.

Research shows that listening to music can reduce anxiety, depression, blood pressure, and pain as well as improve sleep quality, mood, memory, some cognitive functions, enhance learning and concentration, and ward off the effects of brain ageing.

It's one of the few activities that stimulates your whole brain, no matter whether people were listening to Vivaldi or the Beatles.

Research proves that music therapy can improve health outcomes in a wide variety of populations, from premature infants and children with autism, ADHD or developmental and learning disabilities, to people with emotional trauma, substance abuse problems, brain injuries, physical disabilities, acute and chronic pain, depression, Parkinson's disease, and more.

In one study, patients about to undergo surgery who listened to music had less anxiety and lower cortisol levels than people who had taken drugs. The analysis determined that music has positive effects on brain chemistry and associated mental and physical health benefits by lifting mood, reducing stress and boosting immunity.

Science has shown that listening to music enhances reading and literacy skills, reasoning, and mathematical abilities. Learning to play a musical instrument is one of the best things you can do for your brain, at any age. One study showed that just four years of music lessons in youth improved certain brain functions 40 years later!

Just listening to music for enjoyment has positive effects too. Older people who listened to specific types of music showed increased processing speed and improved episodic memory. Even for persons with severe dementia, music can tap deep into emotional recall. Personal music favourites can often calm chaotic brain activity and enable the listener to focus on the present moment and regain a connection to others.

Healthwatch

Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin (HWT&W) is the independent consumer champion for local people who use Health and Social Care Services.

We gather the views and experiences of patients, service users, carers, and the general public about these services. These include Hospitals, GPs, Mental Health Services, Community Health Services, Pharmacists, Opticians, Residential Care and Children's Services. We share their views with those who have the power to make change happen.

All services are working extremely hard to provide for the needs of Telford and Wrekin residents. Everyone is doing their best, working collaboratively to cope effectively with the high demand levels generated by increased people's needs. We appreciate all the hard work, time and effort that health and social care workers and those in non-clinical support roles have contributed to supporting people; in every way that they are able, during this pandemic.

It is important that organisations gather balanced knowledge on how best to support people, gaining a clear understanding of what residents' feel has worked well and also finding out how things might be improved or better developed for the future.

We would like to invite people to share their views and experiences on using Health and Social Care Services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our survey may have finished by the time you read this, (www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8QWD8G7) but we welcome comments by phone, email or post.

Tel: 01952 739540 or by email:
telford.admin@healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.co.uk

Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin

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You can also visit our website www.healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.co.uk and leave views for individual health and social care services.

Have a go at these two quizzes, answers after the quizzes

Food Quiz

1. Which food comes in chestnut, oyster or shitake varieties?
2. Which convenience food takes its name from the phrase "spiced ham"?
3. What are dried plums called?
4. What does the abbreviation UHT mean when applied to milk?
5. What ferments in brine to become Sauerkraut?
6. What delicacy comes from the fattened livers of geese?
7. What are the TWO principal ingredients in a Hollandaise Sauce?
8. From which vegetable is the Russian soup Borscht predominantly made?
9. What is made from Pig's blood, pork fat and cereal?
10. What kind of meat surrounds a Scotch Egg?
11. Which cooked meat is made from the head of a pig?
12. What is the name for a steak that has been cut from between two ribs?
13. What type of Indian cookery would be cooked in a clay oven?
14. In the Atkins Diet, which food group do you cut out?

70s Quiz

1. What was ended by the signing of the Paris Peace Accord in 1973?
2. Which branch of the British military did Prince Charles join in 1970?
3. Which song won the 1974 Eurovision Song Contest?
4. The sales of which car overtook those of the Model T Ford in 1971?
5. Which silent film star was knighted by the Queen in 1975?
6. What name was given to the portable cassette tape players sold by Sony in the late 1970's?
7. The rings around which planet were discovered in 1977?
8. What was the name of the World's first test-tube baby born on July 25th 1978?
9. Which newspaper resumed publication in November 1979 after a strike that lasted almost a year?
10. Who expelled 50,000 Asians from Uganda in 1972?
11. Which Royal marriage took place at Westminster Abbey on 14th November 1973?
12. Who replaced Jeremy Thorpe as leader of the Liberal Party in 1976?
13. Which team won the first Cricket World Cup in 1975?
14. Which music show aired for the first time live on BBC2 in September 1971?

Answers

Food Quiz

1. Mushrooms
2. Spam
3. Prunes
4. Ultra Heat Treated
5. Cabbage
6. Pate de Foie Gras
7. Egg yolks, butter
8. Beetroot
9. Black Pudding
10. Sausage meat
11. Brawn
12. Entrecote
13. Tandoori
14. Carbohydrates

70s Quiz

1. The Vietnam War
2. Royal Navy
3. Waterloo by ABBA
4. Volkswagen Beetle
5. Charlie Chaplin
6. Walkman
7. Uranus
8. Louise Brown
9. The Times
10. Idi Amin
11. Princess Anne to Capt. Mark Phillips
12. David Steel
13. West Indies
14. The Old Grey Whistle Test

Great War – Results of the Battle of the Somme July 1916

by Dave Wright

Having finished our series on Great War Poets and Authors, this time we are looking at some of the results of the Great War and the Battle of the Somme, July 2016.

Summary of the Orders of the Day, 3rd July, General von Below Commander of the 2nd Army:

“The decisive issue of the war depends on the victory of the 2nd Army on the Somme. We must win this battle in spite of the enemy’s temporary superiority in artillery and infantry. The important ground lost in certain places will be recaptured by our attack after the arrival of reinforcements.

“For the present, the important thing is to hold on to our present positions at any cost and to improve them by local counterattacks. “I forbid the voluntary evacuation of trenches. The will to stand firm

must be impressed on every man in the Army. The enemy should have to carve his way over heaps of corpses. Every available means must be utilized to push forward the construction of the front line, intermediate lines and defensive line in the rear. These must be constructed on the reverse slopes, in order that their position and the details of their final construction may be concealed from the enemy's view." v. Below

Summary of notes presented by Allied Staff Officers for commanders at the end of July.

German Troops Employed JULY 1916:

The number of troops maintained by the Germans on the Western Front has varied between 116 and 123 Divisions during the past six months. At the end of July, it stands at 120+ Divisions along the complete Front. At the commencement of this battle, 8 of these German divisions held the sector of the line attacked by 3 of our Divisions in close reserve at Cambrai and St Quentin.

By 31st July the Germans had increased their total number of Divisions to 30 to resist our attacks. These extra Divisions have had to be drawn from every part of the Western Front. Germany has had to put in nearly as many divisions to resist our offensive as she employed during five months in her own effort to take Verdun.

Six German Divisions which had already fought and suffered very severely and had been withdrawn to rest and reform, had to be again employed in the Somme battle. Assuming the wastage in Divisions to continue at the same rate for another six weeks, then, theoretically, every German Division on the Western Front will have been employed and the enemy's power of resistance will have been weakened accordingly.

Data Available:

The effect of the offensive on Germany may, therefore, be summed up as follows:

1. 1st - 27th July, not less than 166 German hospital trains were observed to move from Belgium to Germany. Allowing for unobserved hours, this represents at least 50,000 gravely wounded men.
2. The total number of prisoners taken by the Allies now amounts to 26,000.
3. All evidence points to an exceptionally large number of German dead. Whilst any estimate must be largely speculative, it is not unduly sanguine to approximate the total German casualties at the certainly not less than 130,000.

In Summary:

1. Germany has had to draw troops from the whole extent of her Western Front to meet the threat.
2. She has been forced to employ numbers per yard exceeding those employed for the offensive operations on the Verdun front.
3. In spite of such reinforcements it has proved possible for the Allies to maintain a superiority of numbers and of guns in the battle.
4. Owing to the battle, Germany has been unable to move troops to meet the Russian offensive in the East. Had she been able to, which calculations show would amount to 19 Divisions, it is more than possible that the Russian offensive would have been unable to make progress.

5. The German offensive on the Verdun front appears to have been definitely postponed, if not entirely abandoned.

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