



Stoic News

The Voice of older people in Southern Test Valley

Publisher STOIC

Volume No. 1

Issue No. 3

Date September 2009

FEATURE ARTICLE

I intend to create a feature article in each of the two monthly newsletters, about institutions and organizations which have influenced the formation of STOIC, so please keep an eye open for future newsletters and become better informed.

We are featuring 'Testway Housing Telecare' (name and address supplied) in this issue and in the future Paul Buxton on 'Age Concern', Dorothy Baverstock on 'Romsey Parish Council'; all these people are, of course, members of your committee. I would particularly like [any reader](#), who has connections with an organisation of interest to older people, to get in touch with me so that I can feature them and their organizations. It could possibly lead to new members for you and highlight your services. You will find my telephone number and email address in the Editor's Notes section. Veronica (editor)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

STOIC Forum meetings are held every two months at Age Concern 24 Linden Rd, Romsey. The next meeting is on: Friday 13 November at 2.00 pm. – speaker on 'Reducing Doorstep Crime' Membership of £5 from November

The forums give an opportunity for over 55's to get together and discuss local issues important to them; to have a voice, a say in what matters to them in the areas of community, health, leisure, education, safety, housing, transport, benefits and age discrimination etc.

For more information on items raised at previous meetings or if you need transport you can ask Paul Buxton at Age Concern 24, Linden Rd Romsey on 01794 521398 or carerssupport.romsey@virgin.net to read the minutes of previous meetings or visit the Website: www.romseynet.org.uk/STOIC/index.html

A Testament to Testway Housing

I spent two months in hospital recently after tripping and breaking my leg. I was finally discharged after six weeks with a brace on my leg feeling vulnerable and alone. Through 'Telecare' Testway Housing I was later fitted with 'Lifeline', a device with a microphone around my neck connected to an office manned by staff that will put you in touch with help, if you are in trouble. I had always been against neck devices I felt too independent but I am so glad I relented.

Testway Housing functions under many umbrellas not only housing. A lady rings me fortnightly to see if I am managing; to see if I need anything. They offered to find me a cleaning lady, as floors and bending are difficult but I have a friend who comes weekly.

My fortnightly visitors are always very tactful and show their identity. They ask lots of questions, how are they to know your needs otherwise! They have checked my income and as a result I have had my council tax reduced and rent subsidised. They have also provided me with an 'attendance allowance' although I told them I didn't need a 'carer' but that apparently is the name of the allowance.

I still feel I have my independence yet I am grateful for the help and I don't feel so alone. This help is available to anyone who is struggling they don't need to have been to hospital.

Alzheimer's Information Point – September 2009

**Expanding to include drop-in café for carers and cared for
Relatives may be left while carers shop etc. by prior arrangement.**

**Activity afternoons for carers, disabled and older people which will include games, crafts and
other activities**

Please contact Delia or Rory on 01794 515908 or 515126

THE LAST MEETING - *Jenny Wells, Testway Housing and Telecare*

Jenny first explained that Testway Housing has a larger service area than the one which was originally covered by Test Valley Council.

Jenny brought along some samples of the equipment that Telecare, a branch of Testway Housing, provide. This equipment is affordable and is designed to help people, who live on their own, feel that should an emergency happen, then help can be summoned at the touch of a button.

The first piece of equipment to be demonstrated is attached to the telephone system. It is not just for emergency health situations, but can be used if there are bogus callers, doorstep knockers and can also be linked to smoke and flood detectors; this comes with a pendant.

There are alternative devices, a watch with fluorescent hands and units which attach to trouser belts. These devices can be operated from as far from the phone as the end of a fairly large garden. This equipment is installed by approved and accredited services.

Everyone is assessed individually for their particular needs; an annual update and check will be undertaken every year. Extra staff have been employed as the workload has expanded.

Other pieces of equipment Jenny demonstrated were carbon monoxide alarms to detect gas; medication dispensers (arrangements can be made with chemists to fill these); for the hard of hearing, flashing beacon detectors and key safes fitted to the front to prevent need for key duplication or loss.

Jenny explained that there is a much larger range of devices than those she had shown us. Each individual is assessed for the equipment which would most suit their individual needs and emphasized that this would be reassessed at each annual review. The basic cost of the service is £3.65 per week and a call should have 60 second answer rate from the monitoring centre, manned by well trained staff in Sevenoaks in Kent.

The meeting which was chaired by Tracey Eldridge in the absence of Anne Meader and Dorothy Baverstock closed with A.O.B which included a push for a minibus to the General Hospital, Veronica's appeal for newsletter distributors, Eunice's advice about ICE mobile phone numbers and 'Carers Together' carers' emergency cards and action plan project.

EXTRACTS

SOUTHERN DAILY ECHO

Age Concern attacks Housing Downgrade

In spite of New Forest District council confirming they have a long waiting list for sheltered housing it is surprising they have also decided to reduce the number of sheltered housing units. They appear to think that although numbers of over 60's are due to increase in the next few years, more older people will be opting to remain in their own homes with support.

It is to be hoped a similar situation does not happen in Test Valley as it is important that older people have a choice. Some older people value their independence while others appreciate the companionship sheltered housing offers.

Withdrawal of Free Bus Passes

It has been rumoured in the press that the Government are considering withdrawing free bus passes. One Echo letter puts a response very clearly:-

‘So they are trying to claw back the senior bus passes? One reason not to do this is that some people who drive are giving up their cars to use the buses. Isn’t that what they’ve been asking us to do? The way they are considering through means-testing is wrong. How much would it cost for all the documentation and administration to do this and how much would the staff need to be paid to check all this and to investigate who is lying about their income?’ Grow up and leave well alone and if possible add free train travel!

TEST VALLEY NEWS

Fuel Poverty

If you spend more than 10% of your income on fuel you are considered to be in fuel poverty. Make sure if you are over 60 you are signed up for your fuel payment of £250. If you are over 70 you are eligible for free roof and wall insulation under the Warm Front scheme

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Anyone with any comments or concerns, good or bad, about matters raised at the current or past forums or have suggestions for future meeting topics are invited to write to the editor by post or e-mail for inclusion in ‘Stoic News’ (Mrs Veronica Lakey, 21, Tadfield Crescent., Romsey.

Tel: 01794 514609 Email: oakbank21@talktalk.net

The ‘**Stoic News**’ is aimed at the public in general and not for members alone. It does not set out to duplicate Paul’s very professional and well recorded ‘Notes on the last meeting’ but gives a brief summary for the benefit of people not attending the meeting and is posted with this newsletter on the website

www.romseynet.org.uk/STOIC/index.html

We want anyone who has a gripe or praise to feel they can get in touch with the editor for inclusion in the next newsletter and perhaps inspire topic and speaker for future meetings. Please remember we are not just interested in health issues but in anything that interests you.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS - The Stoic committee need volunteers for:

Delivering the newsletter to the following areas:

All the Churches except the Abbey and St Swithins

North Baddesley – Village Hall, Churches, Surgeries and Shop

All villages except Lockerley and Nursling

Retirement home except Linden Court and Wakeford Court

Volunteers will each be responsible for pinning a newsletter to the notice boards at their chosen location around the town and surrounding areas and leaving a small pile for people to take away. This is definitely not a door-to-door delivery. Please get in touch with Veronica details above’.

Member’s attendance at the ‘Test Valley’s Transport Forum’

A volunteer is needed to attend ‘Transport Forum’ meetings which meet variably and alternate between Romsey and Andover. See Anne Meader for details.

ACRONYMS

STOIC – Southern Test Older Independent Campaigners

HCC – Hampshire County Council

TVBC – Test Valley Borough Council

LINK – Local Involvement Network

SUHT – Southampton University Hospital Trust

ICE – In Case of Emergency