

## Newsletter July 2020

Firstly, I hope that you are all well and have been managing to keep safe during this awful Pandemic.

Since Lockdown Phil, Tony and our volunteers have been making regular phone calls to our more vulnerable clients.

Thankfully all of those we contacted had family, friends and neighbours helping with shopping and other necessities. Also, what we found encouraging was that everyone we phoned were like wise phoning each other and keeping in touch. This is most encouraging to see that over the years opnocs had helped so many of its members to forge new relationships and make new friends

Secondly, apologies for not producing the newsletter earlier in the year but during lockdown and, like most organisations, statutory and voluntary, Phil and I have been working from home.

This has meant that we have been unable to access the office for jobs such as printing off large numbers of newsletters and address labels.

### Membership

Paid membership now stands at 85. We appreciate that some of our existing members were unable to re-register due to the introduction of the lockdown in mid-March. Obviously they will be welcome to re-register in due course.

### Trips and Events

Unfortunately, we had to cancel the trips to Chester and Llandudno.

As things stand at the moment it seems that the September trip will not go ahead. Places on the coach would have to be limited resulting in a high cost for members.

We are still hopeful about arranging an event in October and the Christmas Meal in December. We will be talking to the steward at Kings Heath Cricket Club, however everything will be dependent on the situation and the Government guidelines at that time.

In addition places may have to be limited and attendance based on a first come, first served basis.

### Activities.

Opnocs will continue to support the activities listed below. As soon as it is safe to do so we will recommence the activities

### Weekly Chair Yoga session.

This is held from 10-11 at The Housing Department Sheltered Housing Scheme, Silver Street, Kings Heath. The current charge is £3 to include one hour session and light refreshments.

Mari, our yoga teacher, has been holding weekly sessions on Facebook and YouTube. At the start of lockdown we did inform our members who usually attended the weekly sessions. However, not everyone would have been able to access the sites. That said one lady recently informed us that her son helped to access the sites and she has been enjoying the sessions.

If anyone has a Smart TV and is interested in following the sessions, the link is [marisgreenyoga mccann](#)

### Weekly coffee morning

Meet every Friday 10.30-12 at the same venue.

Since it started in October last year 33 different people have dropped in. A great opportunity to catch up for a chat with old friends or even make new friendships. We ask for a 50p donation to cover the cost of tea, coffee biscuits and cake. All are welcome just drop by.

### Volunteer Befriending

Due to the Pandemic there haven't been many new referral from Social Work teams. We did receive a referral from a Housing Association in early April. Unfortunately, due to the Pandemic, we were unable to visit in order to undertake the initial assessment. Until such time that we can visit both Tony and Peggy, one of our volunteer telephone befrienders, are in constant touch with the person. We undertake an assessment in order to ensure that the person's home is safe, secure and that they receive benefits to which they are entitled.

We currently have 11 volunteers which is a great improvement on previous years.

## **Scams**

Just a reminder about the scams still going on. Usually about a faulty computer, a recent road accident and many others.

The majority of our members may be fully aware of some of these scams. Unfortunately there may be others that are so trusting of the lovely person on the other end of the phone that they offer their card details and end up losing their life savings.

Most recently there have been people selling faulty Coronavirus testing kits and facemasks which are totally not fit for purpose. Only the other day a person was contacted to be told that they would be eligible for a coronavirus home testing test kit. They were told that there was charge and would need the person's card details.

During a recent catch up call one of our members asked Tony to highlight what she thought might be a scam and to warn other members. The member received a call from Lloyds Bank, Maypole. The member actually banks at the Kings Heath branch.

Amongst other things the caller asked about the member's health. Also, the member was asked if she knew about Credit Transfers.

The caller then asked if she could help with anything. The member who had been trying to find the phone number of the local Post office for a neighbour asked the caller if she could help. The caller abruptly ended the call.

Another person was contacted by Paddington Police Station stating that her credit card details had been cloned. She was asked to phone 999. Realising that the first person was still on the phone she became suspicious and ended the call

The bottom line is never ever give your bank or card details over the phone.

## **Contacting opnocs**

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