

Newsletter January 2017

Firstly, the staff and committee wish all of our clients and members a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

However, on a sad note we wish to inform you of the passing of Polly Hackett. Polly has worked tirelessly over the last number of years as a Befriending Coordinator. Her expertise and enthusiasm will be sadly missed.

AGM

The AGM will take place on Tuesday 7th February at Balsall Heath Church Centre, Mary Street Balsall Heath. The meeting will commence at 1pm followed by light refreshments until 2pm. During this period members will be asked to renew their membership of £2 per annum.

Also, questionnaires will be circulated asking members what kind of services they would like to see provided by opnocs and if there are any preferences for trips over the coming year. Raffle tickets will be on sale. From 2pm until 2.45 light entertainment will be provided

Funding update

Birmingham City Council have agreed to extend our funding until the end of March. The Council are currently undertaking a consultation process in order to assess what cuts can be made to social care services and how they will affect services to citizens. Opnocs has submitted its proposals and has offered to reduce some services in order to meet these demands. Our proposals together with those from providers across the City will be considered by councilors prior to setting the budget for 2017-2018.

In the meantime, Val and the team are looking at options to raise funding from other sources so that our services can continue.

Computer classes

We are still offering free computer classes for the over 60's on Monday mornings from 10.30 – 12

These are held at St. Pauls Trust farm office in Malvern Street off Clifton Road, Balsall Heath. In addition, we are looking at the possibility of putting on some training in basic media such as Facebook and Twitter. If interested, please contact the office on 464 1890 (Monday 9 – 1) or Iffat on 07969 746304 Participants are asked to contribute £1 per session towards refreshments.

Yoga classes.

There are limited places but if anyone is interested in joining this group please contact Iffat. The sessions are held on Thursdays at St Pauls in Clifton Road from 10-11.30.

Craft Cooperative

The group meets every Wednesday at the Balsall Heath Initiative Centre, St Pauls Trust, Clifton Road from 10 – 2. £5 per session. For more information, contact Sephi on 07429 441418 or e-mail s.duerden44@btinternet.com.

Middleton Road Coffee Morning

The group meets every Thursday from 10-11 at the sheltered housing scheme in Middleton Road, Kings Heath. For more information, contact Val Hart on 689 2584.

Volunteering

The good news is that we have received a few enquiries from people interested in volunteering.

With the closure of day centres and lunch clubs there is more demand for our befriending services. We are regularly receiving referrals from various sources.

No person who is experiencing social isolation is turned away. If we cannot provide a home visiting or telephone befriender the person is placed on a waiting list. Hopefully, if they have some form of mobility they are invited to join us on our trips and events.

If anyone feels that they can offer support as a befriending volunteer, then please get in touch with us. Our contact details are below.

Doorstep scams

Scammers commonly target older people for doorstep scams. In fact, 85% of victims of doorstep scams are aged 65 and over. We'll show you some simple steps that you can take to help you stay safe on your doorstep. Doorstep scams are when someone comes to your door with the aim of scamming you out of your money or trying to gain access to your home to steal items from inside. While there are many legitimate tradespeople and officials, it's wise to be on your guard when you answer your door. Doorstep scammers can be pushy and persuasive and it can be easy to fall victim. It's especially important to be vigilant and aware if you live on your own.

Protect yourself

Lock, stop, chain and check

Whenever you answer the door remember to lock, stop, chain, check.

Lock: secure all your other outer doors as the person at the door may intend to distract you while an accomplice gets in through a back door

Stop: think about whether you're expecting anyone

Chain: put the door chain on or look through the window or spyhole to see who's there

Check: ask for an identity card and examine it carefully - you can always tell the caller to come back another time when someone will be with you.

Put up a deterrent sign

You could put a 'no cold callers' sign up on your door or window, which should deter any cold callers from knocking on your door.

Password protected

You can set up a password with your utility companies so you know that they are genuine if they send someone round. Phone your utility company to find out how to do this.

Nominate a neighbour

Find out if you have a nominated neighbour scheme where a neighbour can help to make sure if callers are safe. Contact your local [Neighbourhood Watch](#) or your local Safer Neighbourhood police team to find out more.

Check their credentials

You should always check a seller or trader's credentials before agreeing to purchase their products or services.

Call the police

Finally, remember that you can dial 999 if you're suspicious or the caller won't leave. Call the police non-emergency number 101 if you're not in immediate danger but want to report an incident.

If you've been the victim of scam.

There's no shame or embarrassment in falling victim to a scam – it happens to lots of people. If you report it, it may help to prevent others from experiencing the same thing.

Contacting Opnocs

Tony, Phil and Iffat can be contacted on 464 1890. If unanswered you will be directed to the admin office who will take a message.

Our mobile numbers are as follows:

Tony 07951737875

Phil 07954605036

Iffat 07969746304

Also, we can be contacted by e-mail at opnocs@stpaulstrust.org.uk.

Trip to Leicester

We are planning a trip to Leicester on Thursday 23 March. We will be visiting the Richard III Visitor Centre. Other attractions include shopping, the Cathedral and guided tours. Further details and booking forms will be available at the AGM