

Services for the ageing population

The issue of an ageing population is affecting many areas of the UK, but few as dramatically as is the case in East and West Sussex. The appeal of the picturesque Sussex countryside and its adjacency to the equally attractive coastline, has led large numbers of retirees and those close to retirement to move into both Counties. Current evidence shows that over a quarter of rural residents in each County are of pensionable age, with many more approaching pension age. This trend has been increasing over the past 20 or 30 years and is forecast to continue at an increasing rate into the future.

The implications of this ageing population are significant for service providers who face an ever increasing demand on their limited pool of resources, but they are equally demanding on the individuals themselves as they face many barriers in maintaining an independent lifestyle. Supporting older people to remain active is a crucial component in preventing isolation and ensures that rural communities remain diverse and inclusive environments.

One characteristic of the ageing population that has a significant impact on both individuals and the communities in which they reside is the increasing number of the retired and elderly who live alone. In both East and West Sussex over half of lone pensioner households are found in rural areas. It is important to assist people in remaining in their own home using both public sector and voluntary support services.

East Sussex statistics

38,770 people of pensionable age in rural areas, out of **141,070** rural dwellers, which is **27.4%** of the total rural population

There are **9,440** lone pensioner households in rural areas, which is **53.5%** of all such households

West Sussex statistics

47,685 people of pensionable age in rural areas, out of **190,215** rural dwellers, which is **25.1%** of the total rural population

There are **11,475** lone pensioner households in rural areas, which is **53.4%** of all such households

Tillington Local Care

A new village group to facilitate care for anyone in need

With funding help from Chichester Locality Adults Services, a group in Tillington have set up a scheme offering assistance to anyone in the Parish needing health care, special aids, benefits advice, or any of the many support services available through local organisations.

The Tillington Local Care (TLC) scheme was set up to raise awareness of what is freely available in terms of help and support, as people are unsurprisingly unaware until they need it. This is particularly true of those going into or coming out of hospital.

TLC can access over 120 care and support organisations ranging from Alzheimers' support groups, to equipment and adaptations in the home and from teenage cancer help, to independent living funds.

Forging links with organisations has allowed TLC to facilitate whatever help, care, or support a person may need.

There are five very important aspects of how TLC functions:

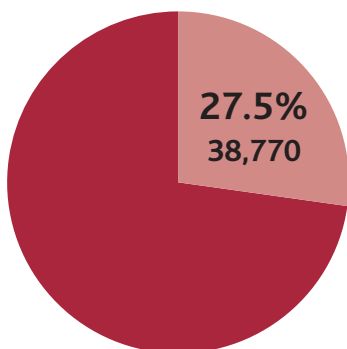
- 1 TLC does not intrude uninvited, but exists to respond to requests for help.
- 2 All communications are subject to strict confidentiality rules.
- 3 Agreed written consent is required to facilitate appropriate care from the right source.
- 4 Apart from transport, the group does not offer direct care. The aim is to connect residents with recognised providers.
- 5 Initial contact to TLC is simple with one phone call all that is needed.

TLC has charitable status under the umbrella of the Village Hall. All team members understand and respect that confidentiality and integrity are paramount.

For more information go to the 'Advocacy Policy & Research' button on the home page of the Action in rural Sussex (AirS) website at www.ruralsussex.org.uk

To be put in touch with the group, contact AirS; contact details are on the back page.

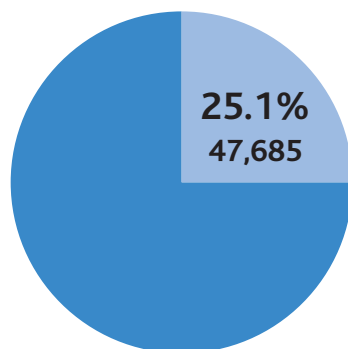
The proportion of people of pensionable age in rural East Sussex



Total rural population: 141,070

■ People of pensionable age

The proportion of people of pensionable age in rural West Sussex



Total rural population: 190,215

■ People of pensionable age

Services for older people

With more people living longer, communities will be looking to activities and services, particularly around health and social care, to support their older residents to remain active, healthy, safe, independent and happy.

Across East and West Sussex rural communities are often working tirelessly to set up and run a range of activities, events and services for older people, carers, those with dementia and mental health problems and those that are lonely and isolated.

The list of activities is endless and includes befriending, lunch clubs, day care, social events, outings, prescription runs, car schemes, toenail cutting, help at home, a variety of exercise and well-being classes, singing, dancing, yoga and computer skills training. Most are run by volunteers who give of their time and energy to help neighbours, friends and fellow residents some with the support of their parish council and agencies such as Action in rural Sussex (AirS), AgeUK and the Alzheimer's Society. All play a major role in supporting older people to remain in their own communities.

On these pages are a few examples of community activity and self help that can have such a big impact. If you would like further information or some advice in setting up something in your community, contact: Pat Buesnel on 01273 405441 or email Pat.Buesnel@ruralsussex.org.uk

Facts about Alzheimers/dementia

- There are currently about 750,000 people in the UK with a form of dementia.
- There are over 16,000 people under 65 with dementia in the UK.
- One in 14 people over 65 years of age and one in six people over 80 years of age has a form of dementia.

The well established prevalence rates, i.e. how often it occurs, for dementia in the UK are:

- 40-64 years: 1 in 1400
- 65-69 years: 1 in 100
- 70-79 years: 1 in 25
- 80+ years: 1 in 6

Source: Alzheimer's Society



Village Care Health and Well-being Information Pack

A useful resource, including model documents, for anyone wanting to set up a group or community activity to support older people. Available from our website at www.ruralsussex.org.uk



Above: Vicki Hill with Tony and Dilwyn at one of the winter workshops at Glyndebourne

Lewes Villages and North Weald Dementia Joint Projects between AirS and the Alzheimer's Society

"I felt we began to live again once we joined some of the groups; before our life had shrunk to a once a week trip to Tescos, we were both depressed and I didn't really know what was wrong with my husband or how to negotiate the confusing health system."

Jane and Bert regularly attend the Ringmer coffee mornings, Jane comes to the support group as well as circle dancing in Cooksbridge. Bert had previously said that he would never, ever dance, but now shows off his steps to anyone and everyone. Along with other carers and people with dementia they joined the wonderful Glyndebourne winter workshops and a singing group in Lewes has now grown from this. A break from caring for someone with dementia is important, but so is sharing something together.

Looking after a loved one with dementia can be challenging and exhausting, so having a break can help avoid crisis points. Connie is supported, through the project, to attend a weekly ballroom dancing class, set up within the community specifically for older people with dementia. This gives Gerald some much needed respite, a break to relax and refresh, knowing that she is safe, happy and doing something she enjoys.

Contact details:

Lewes Village – contact Vicky Hill at

LewesVillagesOutreach@alzheimers.org.uk

Wealden – contact Caroline.Scotter@ruralsussex.org.uk



This project piloted by the Chichester Isolation Action Group and managed by AirS, brought together the oldest and youngest members of the community and provided opportunities to learn from each other, reduce isolation and increase well-being.

Ten older adults and 14 children from Chidham Primary School participated and the project spanned two separate days in the Spring. All who took part were from the Villages around Chichester Harbour.

The first day was a Day Out at Dell Quay, hosted by the Chichester Harbour Conservancy consisting of a picnic lunch and a trip on the solar powered boat around the harbour.

The Year 5 children chose four topics of interest to work on with their 'elder' partners. These were Boats, Birds, Sea Creatures and World War 2. The quiet transit of the solar powered boat enabled children and adults alike to forge bonds.

On the second day the children greeted the 'elders' at the school gate and friendships were renewed. The children showed the 'elders' around their school even into the music

Contact Pat Buesnel at Pat.Buesnel@ruralsussex.org.uk

cupboard! Leaving some to wonder for a moment whether they were playing 'Sardines!'

Everyone sat together in the school dining room for lunch and for many 'elders' it had been well over 75 years since they had done that, if at all!

After lunch, participants worked in their topic groups and all contributed together in celebrating the learning experience; those who took pleasure in recounting their 'living history' and those who listened avidly. It was clear from their faces that the children were all eager to listen.

Only those who participated can really assess the benefit from this project. One positive and true measure of this, is that both children and 'elders' are maintaining contact with each other through letter writing. The 'elders' have now been invited to the School's Sports Day and School Centenary events.

Four children and an 'elder' have been invited to talk 'on air' about the Days Out on the local Angel Radio Station.

It is evident that the opportunity offered by this project was embraced enthusiastically by all.



Hurst Green features again in this edition, illustrating how an active community provides support across a range of different needs. This example shows how with some outside help a range of volunteers can come together to provide much needed services for the older people in their community.

The Carousel Angels, Hurst Green

In September 2008, a series of meetings and social events were held to collect ideas for an older people's social club for the Village. The initial meeting was held in partnership with the Hastings & Rother Primary Care Trust to coincide with 'Know Your Numbers' blood pressure week. As a result the first session of Carousel Angels was held in November in the Village Hall and included an exercise session followed by games, quizzes and a talk.

The group, run by volunteer co-ordinator, Marianne Rosewell, with the help of others and supported by AirS' Caroline Scotter has gone from strength to strength. Caroline also organised enjoyable healthy eating and lifestyle sessions and a series of talks about the various support services that older people could access locally. Recently a partnership has been established with Claverham Adult Education College to deliver a variety of free taster sessions including Alternative Therapies, Floristry, Sugarcraft and Creative Re-cycling.

Discussions with the Adult College for rural East Sussex (ACRES), have led to computer skills courses being held in the Village Hall. Four free courses were run, each involving about 16 older people.

The Village Action Plan had identified a need for a monthly lunch club for older people. Again with help from Caroline the Club was launched in February 2009. As anticipated, it is now more or less self funding with a charge of £3.50 for a two course home cooked meal and a regular raffle. Up to 30 older people regularly attend. In addition, with the help of volunteer drivers, people from Etchingham also attend. All this activity and an opportunity to get out of the house and meet others has made a real difference to a large number of older people in Hurst Green and Etchingham, the majority of whom live alone with no transport.

This will complement the community shop and Drop-in Centre project featured in the last edition of Action and supported through the AirS Rural Access to Service programme.

Contact Caroline Scotter, Wealden & Rother Village Care Programme on 01424 777982 or email Caroline.Scotter@ruralsussex.org.uk