



Hello and welcome to our AOPF Member's Notice Board. It has indeed been a strange year for us all. When the first Lockdown started in March 2020 nobody expected this awful pandemic to go on so long. A bit like the war, "it'll all be over by Christmas"; but sadly it wasn't.

As there could be no AGM meeting we asked you if you would like the present Committee to remain in situ until the next AGM could be held, and most of you who replied agreed to this.

In the last year we have tried to keep you up-to-date with those things affecting Older People. The Website has been updated with helpful information and contact numbers. However we do appreciate not everyone is connected to the Internet, and without our meetings, not all of us have been able to share with one another.

Late summer we invited you to contact us and share your stories of how you managed during Lockdown and what it meant to you. There is a "Lockdown" page on the Website where the letters were published and a printed version was sent out to those without the internet and those we had addresses for. In November names of the letter writers were put into a hat and one name drawn at random for a £25 prize which was won by Sheila. If any of you missed seeing the letters or would like to add your experiences it is not too late just let us know.



The pictures above related to our Lockdown stories.

Some members said they missed participating in things and were unable to join in on Zoom meetings that were organised, as they weren't IT connected. Do any members think, in view of this experience, that given the opportunity and proper one-to-one support that they might now quite like to get connected? Let's hear from you.

Throughout the year we have supported certain National Campaigns affecting Older People. One was supporting Age UK and National Pensioners' Convention (NPC) campaign to keep the free TV Licence for the over 75s. We also joined the lobby for an improved Care System. NPC produced a booklet entitled "Goodbye Cinderella" which aimed to address some of the issues. The booklet went out to every MP and other people and organisations in authority. The hour and 40 minute Care Sector Webinar can be found on our Website, or the booklet is available on request to AOPF (contact addresses below).

One local issue we are very interested in is the plans for a new hospital. Consultation papers have gone out but it is difficult to know exactly what the long-term strategy is. Do you have any views on this? As soon as we are able to have a meeting, it is intended to have someone with knowledge of the situation to come along and meet us all and share their knowledge with us, and maybe answer our questions and queries.

The Covid-19 vaccine programme seems to be rolling out really well. The NHS workers and volunteers are doing a marvellous job and I am sure the sooner we all get our "jabs" the sooner we will be able to get together with family and friends - and enjoy our meetings and refreshments together again! Fingers crossed it will be summer back end latest.



In the meantime we can still keep in contact. There must be all sorts of information or concerns you may have and we can share on this Notice Board which, with your help, will be a regular feature.

The AGM is usually held during April. Would anybody out there like to volunteer to join the Committee or nominate someone? Are any of you willing to give a hand with refreshments or raffles once actual meetings events take place again? Or perhaps shadow a Committee member to see if you would like to become more involved in the work of AOPF? Also is there anyone you know who would like to join us? It doesn't cost anything and is a great way for keeping in touch.

You can write to us at:

AOPF

Andover & District Older People's Forum
22 The Dell, Vernham Dean
Andover SP11 0LF

FINALLY a short reminder..... As you may already know there is to be a National Census for 2021. The documentation will be delivered in March and we all have to fill it in. It should be simple but helpful guidance will be provided.

We are looking forward to hearing from you with your **news** and **views** for the next AOPF Member's Notice Board.

Please share and pass this information/letter on to anyone over the age of 55 that you think would benefit from being a member of AOPF. We welcome new members.

Take good care, stay well and we look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes

AOPF

Andover & District Older People's Forum