



Welcome to the Christmas edition of our AOPF Noticeboard / December 2023 with every good wish for the New Year

Have a Wonderful
& Merry Christmas

Our last meeting of the year on November 23rd saw many new faces and we were very pleased to welcome our Mayor Cllr Philp Lashbrook and the Mayoress Cllr Linda Lashbrook. At the end of the meeting the Mayor was kind enough to address the meeting thanking us all and saying how much he and his wife had enjoyed the afternoon and had heard much of interest to take away with them.

AOPF's Next Meeting.....

Our General Meeting will be in the New Year, Thursday 18th January 2024 at our usual venue, the Baptist Church, Charlton Andover commencing at 2.15pm. You may come earlier and sign in but the doors to the meeting room will not be open until 2pm. We have put a poster with this Notice Board with details that you can display or pass on. Look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

There will be a full Agenda and at this meeting we will be joined by Claire Godding of The Countess of Brecknock Hospice Trust who will be telling us about all the varied work in support and care the Trust do. If there is anything members would like to discuss and suggest as a topic, please let us know. It is your meeting and we always look forward to your input, ideas, thoughts and news.

Before Christmas there are a couple of dates coming up to share with you all. There are some in the New Year too.



Balksbury Federation are again inviting our members to their Intergenerational Christmas café which will be held this year on 11th December at 9.30am. Those who went last year said how much they enjoyed it.



DIGITAL SKILLS FOR HEALTH. Are you able to go online but feel you do not have the skills or confidence to use healthcare resources available on-line? Andover Primary Care Network and Unity are offering a support afternoon designed to help. It is on Thursday 14th December at the Health Hub Chantry Centre. Session one is at 4pm and Session two is 5.30pm. Booking is required and to book your place telephone the Health Hub 07436 145 096.



TRIPLE LOCK RETAINED - Autumn Statement 2023
The Chancellor unveiled the contents of his Autumn Statement in the House of Commons setting out the government's tax and spending plans for the year ahead, affecting the take-home pay and household budgets of millions of people, as well as setting out how much will be spent on key public services. Following the Autumn Statement, the state pension from April 2024 will be as follows:

- £221.20 a week for the new **full** state pension, or £11,502 a year.
- £169.50 a week for the old basic state pension, or £8,814 a year.

Benefits and pensions

- State pension payments to increase by 8.5% from 8th April 2024, in line with average earnings. The full basic state pension will increase by £13.30 a week to £169.50. The full new state pension will increase by £17.35 a week to £221.20.
- Universal Credit and other working-age benefits to increase by 6.7% from April, in line with September's inflation rate.
- Local Housing Allowance rates - which determine the level of housing benefit and Universal Credit people receive for rent - to be unfrozen and increased to 30% of local rents.
- Work Capability Assessment to be reformed to reflect availability of home working after Covid pandemic.
- Funding of £1.3bn over the next five years to help people with health conditions find jobs.
- Further £1.3bn to help people who have been unemployed for over a year.

There appears to be nothing extra in the statement to help our failing public services and struggling health and care sector, even though polls show people, even millionaires, would rather pay higher NI or taxes and see more investment in them. *A YouGov survey found that three-quarters of Britons support a wealth tax. Research by Patriotic Millionaires of those with investable assets of £1m found that 68% of the richest people in the country supported the introduction of wealth taxes.*



News for Carers
The Princess
Royal Trust for
Carers in
Hampshire

alongside SGN Energy Company are holding a Home and Well Carers Hub on Tuesday 23rd January 2024 from 9.30 - 3pm and Tuesday 20th February 9.30 - 3pm in the Augusta Park Community Centre, East Anton Farm Road, Andover SP11 6RD. They will also be holding 10 a month for the next 2 years in locations around Hampshire.

Working in partnership SGN and The Trust will bring together a large network of local community partners to proactively support carers with tailored support services across Hampshire that help to tackle fuel poverty and introduce energy safeguards that help those most vulnerable maintain a safe and warm home.

The partnership is designed to work alongside the Home and Well partnership in Hampshire, providing proactive and preventative support services increasing the support available to carers and those they care for. The shared ambition is to reduce the potential impact on the NHS service and prevent hospitalisation for high risk people as a result of living in a cold and unhealthy home.

The Carers Hub is a 'ONE STOP SHOP' for Carers. It is a central point where many agencies come together to offer support, advice, information and guidance to all Carers. Carers can access relevant information to support their needs, and the needs of the person they care for.

A selection of newspapers will be made available to enjoy at the Hub and they also provide crossword puzzle books, games and jigsaws for the Carers and their cared-for. Light refreshments are also provided. Carers can enjoy a healthy lunch and their cared-for are most warmly welcomed.



Ofgem has decided to review Standing Charges applied to people's energy bills to cover the cost of connecting to a supply. It is hoped that any alternative scheme considered by Ofgem and the government must include extra protections for customers struggling to pay, or those who have high energy use needed for medical reasons. How much you pay in Standing Charges, which are capped by Ofgem varies depending on where you live – the amount of energy that you use is irrelevant for this segment of your energy bill. In most areas the typical household pays 53p a day for electricity and 30p a day for gas which can add an extra £300 to the annual bill. In many cases, the Standing Charge together with the VAT make up around two-thirds of consumer bills. You can submit comments to the Review until 19th January.

Send your comments by email to Ofgem at: StandingCharges@ofgem.gov.uk by 19th January. OR Write to them — Standing Charges Review, Ofgem, 10 South Colonnade, Canary Wharf, London E14 4PU.

REMINISCENCES

The little 6 year old girl in the middle of the photo below is our own AOPF fundraising committee member, Marion Kerley.



Who would ever have thought this little girl would grow up to be the very first ever 'female' manager of any Marks & Spencer store? She took the job of managing the Andover M&S store in 1963 and went on to work for M&S in Andover for 25+ years. Marion's passion has always been people, and she's been a true People Person all her life. This led Marion to 25 years as a councillor on both Andover Town Council and Test Valley Borough Council and she served as our Millennium Mayor of Test Valley from 1999 to 2000.

In 2017 Marion was awarded an MBE on the Queen's Birthday Honours list for 50 years of service to the Andover Community. Marion was recognised for completing more than 19,000 hours of volunteer work in Andover over 50 years. Her most notable work includes her volunteering at Age Concern (now Age UK), for which she was a trustee and adviser from 1985 to 2015. Marion was appointed director of the Andover and District Citizens Advice Bureau from July 1995, and was also a dedicated member, and chairman, of Andover Neighbourhood Watch from 1987.

Marion was an active Director of the Andover Crisis and Support Centre from May 2004; and Neighbourhood Watch since 1987.

The photo below is of Marion receiving her MBE at the Palace. She was delighted to be handed the award by the then Prince Charles, now our King.



What rich memories Marion must have.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN...?

In the last Notice Board we asked if you had any memories of your younger days. **Rita and Brian** offered us their lovely memories to share with you.....

"THOSE WERE THE DAYS"

When I was told to nip out quick and get a shilling for the meter.

The popping's of the gas fire and the yellow glow of the gas mantle (light).

Looking out for the accumulator man (Battery for the radio).

When the "coal man" delivered the bags of coal, being told to go round the back and count the bag's contents that were put down the coal hole.

"Penny for the guy" Sir or Madam.

(We love the "Sir or Madam"!)

Wendy was looking up Christmas Traditions when it jogged her memory of The Christmas Puddings.....

When I was little my grandmother would always make the Christmas Puddings. I well remember her cooking them in 'the copper' (a huge pot) on a little gas stove. But first the whole family had to go round to her house to stir the pudding. No-one was exempt.

I remember standing on a chair and wielding this big wooden spoon with some difficulty and stirring clockwise seriously and silently making a wish. This would bring good luck throughout the year. My favourite part was on Christmas day digging into the pudding and hoping I would be one of the lucky ones to find one of the silver threepenny bits hidden inside. I think I still have some of those threepenny pieces.

We hope more members of AOPF will share stories and achievements they've experienced throughout their lives, so please do think about the times in your lives that may be unusual or interesting for us to read. We'd love to have stories from you all to share with our readers. We know some of you will have interesting memories and stories about how you got through the war years, and how life was back then, and for those born just after the war just how life was then.

And Finally.....

It has been brought to our attention that an error has been spotted on the directions sign outside Andover War Memorial Hospital. Did anyone notice it? "Predestrian" instead of "Pedestrian"?

So we looked around and found some more signs which might make you smile.....

In an office:

'TOILET OUT OF ORDER.....
PLEASE USE FLOOR BELOW'



In a London department store:

BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS'

In an office:

'WOULD THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE STEP LADDER YESTERDAY PLEASE BRING IT BACK OR FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN'

In an office:

AFTER TEA BREAK STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE TEAPOT AND STAND UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD'

Notice in health food shop window:

'CLOSED DUE TO ILLNESS'

Seen during a conference:

'FOR ANYONE WHO HAS CHILDREN AND DOESN'T KNOW IT, THERE IS A DAY CARE ON THE 1ST FLOOR'

Notice in a farmer's field:

'THE FARMER ALLOWS WALKERS TO CROSS THE FIELD FOR FREE, BUT THE BULL CHARGES'

On a repair shop door:

'WE CAN REPAIR ANYTHING. (PLEASE KNOCK HARD ON THE DOOR – THE BELL DOESN'T WORK)'.



MEMBER'S NOTICE BOARD

The AOPF Members Notice Board is for all of us to read, enjoy and stay connected with each other with news, activities, ideas and campaigns which affect those of us over the age of 55.

Please feel free to share your thoughts , ideas and memories with us to keep this Notice Board interesting.

Thank you.

Please send your thoughts to us at andover.opf@gmail.com or by mail to:

Wendy Rayner
AOPF Secretary
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Andover
SP11 0LF

Take care; stay safe and well and we hope you all have a very enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

With very best wishes from your

AOPF Executive Committee