

AGE concern Matters

Stourbridge & Halesowen @ The Elton Centre

Your **LOCAL** support for a brighter later life

Too Good to Miss

There's always plenty being organised to give you a great variety of things to see and do throughout the year — from day trips and short breaks to themed events.

If something catches your eye we recommend booking as soon as possible, usually with Kim, as places can fill up quickly.

Please keep an eye on the noticeboard and our website for details of trips and events arranged.



★ Age Concern Matters

Welcome to the first edition of Age Concern Matters — a publication especially for everyone connected with Age Concern Stourbridge and Halesowen.

Whether you're a customer, volunteer, member of staff, or someone who hires our facilities, we want to say a heartfelt thank you. Your continued support and donations are the lifeblood of our charity — they allow us to keep making a difference in the lives of older people in our community.

So, what's in a name? Quite simply, Age Concern matters — to everyone.

♥ We Are **Your** Charity

The UK's population is ageing, and we're all thinking about later life — staying financially secure, healthy, and active for as long as possible. That's why Age Concern exists: to offer support, advice, and opportunities that help older adults live well and feel valued.

✉ Get Involved

If you'd like to contribute to this publication, share your stories, or simply get in touch, please email info@acsh.org.uk or drop a note at the office marked FAO Age Concern Matters.

Painting the Elton Centre

Over the next couple of weeks, we'll be refreshing several areas within the Elton Centre.

Thanks to support from the Community Payback Scheme — where offenders carry out court-ordered unpaid work to repair the harm caused by their actions — along with generous charity donations, a number of key spaces will be repainted.

All work will take place while the centre is closed to minimise any disruption.

We hope everyone enjoys the fresh new look, and that it helps welcome even more new users into the centre.



What Shall We Do Today?

They say variety is the spice of life — and our wide range of activities certainly proves it.

Every weekday we offer opportunities to meet friends, learn something new, and stay active, all at an affordable cost.

For just a few pounds you can release your inner artist, get creative with crafts, enjoy meditation, learn new digital skills, try your hand at bowls, or even get your feet moving with line dancing.

We also support future generations by hosting children's clubs, including singing and dancing — and some of these talented youngsters have performed at our events.

This isn't the full list. You'll find more activities in our fun wordsearch, or you can visit www.acsh.org.uk/what's-on or speak to a member of staff at the centre to discover what else is happening.

Come along — keep your mind and body active, and make new friends along the way.





Chair's Message

Hello, I'm David. Many of you already know me or have seen me around the Elton Centre, and you'll be able to learn more about me in the next edition. For now, in this first issue of Age Concern Matters, I simply want to say what a pleasure and a privilege it is to serve as Chair of this amazing charity.

Our organisation was founded 51 years ago, and in that time it has seen many changes — especially over the past couple of years. We've all lived through a pandemic that reshaped the world: We lost our authority funding; We had to reduce our operations to the Elton Centre (and activities at the Halesowen Town Hall) after losing Mary Stevens and Green Lane; and we continue to support an ever-growing older population.

Despite all of this, we have faced every challenge head-on and continued to provide a premium service to those who rely on us. This would not be possible without our dedicated staff and volunteers, who go the extra mile every single day. My heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you.

As we navigate these difficult economic times, we must look carefully at how we generate income so we can cover the essential costs of running the charity. We survive through the income we generate, through competitive bids to large organisations, and through the generosity of donations. After much discussion at trustee level, we have had to make the difficult decision to increase some of our prices. This includes classes, food and drink, and room hire. We are truly sorry to pass on these costs, and we hope you understand the reasons behind this decision.

But it's not all doom and gloom. Our wonderful café is busier than ever — and now proudly holds a top five star food hygiene rating. Kim continues to bring joy with her events (and recently celebrated a special birthday!). More clubs are hiring our facilities, giving us a richer and more varied activity calendar for all age groups. And we're looking to the future too, including a fresh repaint of the Elton Centre thanks to a successful community bid.

That's all from me for now. Enjoy the summer, stay safe, and I look forward to seeing you around.

David



Kim's Korner!

Well now... I think most of you at Age Concern know exactly who I am — and if you don't... where have you been hiding! 🤪

I'm the colourful whirlwind who keeps the Elton Centre buzzing. I'm the one organising your events, trips, activities, and generally making sure everything runs like a well-oiled (and occasionally glitter-covered) machine.

A few fun facts about me: I'm a massive speedway fan (Cradley Heathens forever!), a belly and burlesque dancer, an animal lover, a rock-music addict, and completely devoted to Age Concern Stourbridge & Halesowen. Basically... I don't sit still for long!

So, what's the gossip?

Brace yourselves... Christmas is creeping up on us! 🌲
Keep your eyes glued to the noticeboard for all the festive fun — Christmas Lunch, the Christmas Fayre, and more sparkly bits to come.

All our trips and mini coach breaks are now fully booked (I know, I know... sorry if you missed out!). You lot are too quick for me sometimes.

We've got a free belly dance taster session on 24 October, complete with cake 🍰 as part of Ageing Well Week. 12 noon to 2pm. So book your slot with me. Open to everyone.

And don't forget our fabulous fundraising nights — quizzes, skittles, kurling... you name it, we'll play it. A huge shout-out to Kate, Geoff, Tre, and my wonderful husband Paul and daughter Kate for helping me pull these events together. Couldn't do it without you.

That's all from me for now — until I pop up again with more news, mischief and mayhem.

Yours, Kim

Lee's cafe update

Hope everyone's been enjoying the lovely weather and all of the sporting activities. Most of all, I hope you have been enjoying the lovely food and drinks we've had on offer at the Elton Centre Cafe.



Did you know we offer a proper 'cooked' meal on a Thursday? This ensures everyone can have at least one cooked meal per week. But are there any meals you would like to see dished up on this Thursday menu (or placed on the everyday offering)? I'd love to cook a curry to spice up everyone's day - but I want to make sure people would like to buy it!

Keep your eyes peeled for the date of this year's Christmas lunch - it'll be announced sometime in September on the noticeboard. Book up quickly as slots always go quickly!

A final word from me is a great big thank you to the volunteers who help with the cafe. It really is appreciated and we would not be able to run such a first class service without you.

Lee x

Let's Get Involved!

If you feel you want to get involved in something new this Summer there are a lot of opportunities available to you both nationally and locally.

Check out the website at <https://virtualvillagehall.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk>
The Virtual Village Hall was set up by the Royal Voluntary service during lockdown and has gone from strength to strength, providing online courses on creative writing, art, mindfulness, yoga and even how to play the ukulele! Highlights this quarter are the latest allotment diaries for all you gardeners and introductory courses on crafting, including summer garden projects such as insect houses and solar lights.

If gardening is your thing why not visit and support a local project Hawbush Community Garden is a beautiful site located on the Hawbush Estate, within the DY5 area of Brierley Hill. Formerly known as Hawbush Urban Farm, over the years, the land had become neglected and overgrown. However in 2014, a small group of volunteers began work to restore the gardens to their natural beauty. The result was the creation of a peaceful and unique oasis nestled within the community. The gardens include several allotment plots, an orchard with beehives, the peaceful Queen's memorial garden, as well as a woodland area, a large pond and picnic area. Check out all their the summer events on the website <https://hawbushgardens.co.uk>

Finally, pop along to Stevens Park in Quarry Bank and enjoy a wonderful green space in the heart of the area. You will be able to support a special project 'Twigs', run by the Emily Jordan Foundation, working with people with learning difficulties. You can see the work of the group, buy plants and seasonal vegetables, and even get involved as a volunteer. Go to the website <https://www.theemilyjordanfoundationprojects.org.uk> for more details.

Wollescote Park has an excellent sensory garden which holds a Community Green Flag Award. It is cared for by a group of volunteers and regularly has a pop up cafe (. . This space is designed for everyone to enjoy. Visit the Friends of Wollescote Park Facebook page for more details.



Advice When It's Needed Most

Our dedicated Advice Services Volunteers continue to make a real difference in the lives of local people, and we are incredibly grateful for everything they do for our charity and our community.

Between 1 October 2024 and 30 September 2025, our volunteers helped residents access the financial support they were entitled to — more than £300,000 in benefits.

They provided free, confidential advice to 166 clients (82 women and 84 men). The most common enquiries were about Attendance Allowance for people over State Pension Age (nearly £120,000 in successful claims) and Personal Independence Payment for working-age adults (almost £78,000).

What Our Advice Service Can Help With

Our volunteers offer a wide range of advice and information for anyone aged 55+, including:

- Benefits entitlement
- Help completing forms and paperwork
- Blue Badge applications
- Pensions and Pension Credit
- Debt support (referral service)
- Older person's bus pass
- Care and support issues
- Housing concerns
- Employment issues
- Any other worries affecting wellbeing



We have also published important information on our website which you might find useful about services, benefits, pensions, etc. This includes links to relevant genuine websites eg gov.uk.

Get in Touch

If you need advice, you can:

- Call 01384 390065
- Email info@acsh.org.uk
- Drop in to The Elton Centre (appointments may be required)

The service is open Monday to Friday, 10am–1pm.



A Great Big Shoutout to Our Amazing Supporters

We want to give a heartfelt thank you to the wonderful partners and organisations who continue to support our community. Your generosity, time, and kindness make a real difference.

Elton Bowling Club

As many of you know, we run an indoor bowling group at the Elton Centre (check the activities calendar for days and times). A huge shoutout goes to the club for the brilliant work they've done on the car park. Members kindly volunteered their time to repaint the white parking bays at the front of the building. Your hard work is truly appreciated.

Waitrose Stourbridge

A massive thank you to Waitrose Stourbridge for their incredible support. Through their Community Matters initiative, customers raised an amazing £1,000 for our charity via the blue-token voting scheme. We're so grateful for this generous contribution and for the community spirit behind it.



Cradley Community Centre

Another big shoutout goes to Cradley Community Centre for kindly donating a set of hexagon tables. These will be used in our Rainbow Room and are especially helpful as they fold in the middle and stack neatly for easy storage. Thank you for helping us create a more flexible and welcoming space.

Tesco Community Champion

Lee has been working with Tesco's local Community Champion to secure some day to day items for use within the cafe. The champion is someone who works with local charities focussing on support, volunteering and grants.

Works experience

We've been lucky enough to have some works experience students join us over the last couple of months in the cafe. The young people joined us from a number of local schools and they helped take food orders, prepared orders, and assisted to serve and clean up. 🙌 A great big thank you from everyone for a sterling job.

Joining us were Scarlett and Marley from Redhill, Kayden from King Charles I (Kidderminster) and Sharice, Mia and Olivia from Earls High.

Price increases

As you're probably already aware the trustees have had to take the difficult decision to do a blanket increase across all income generating opportunities eg room hire, food and activities. This was a very hard decision to take but as you know everything has been going up - energy costs, food, waste disposal the list just goes on. All of our operating and maintenance costs have risen dramatically and we have minimised the impact upon you, our customers, for as long as possible. By implementing these increases it will help us to continue to offer a safe, welcoming and accessible charity for the benefit of our users. Thank you everyone for your continued support and may we continue for many years to come.

Your Trustees

We wanted to take this opportunity to say a warm hello and to briefly introduce ourselves.

Over the next six editions, we'll shine a spotlight on each trustee so you can get to know us better as individuals — the people behind the work we do.

Every trustee gives their time and expertise voluntarily, driven by a shared passion for ensuring that everyone has the chance to enjoy an enriched, fulfilling later life.

Trustees for August 2026

- David Harbach — Chair
- Gaye Partridge — Deputy Chair
- Dr Paul Collins
- Brian Mitchell
- Julie Sheldon
- Mark Williams



Our thanks also goes to Lynne who acts as the secretary for trustees meetings.

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Bereavement Support: We're Here for You ♥

Grief can feel overwhelming, but you don't have to face it alone.

Small, friendly group.
Bring someone with you if you wish.



Join our Monthly
Bereavement Support Drop-In
at the Café.

A safe, welcoming space to meet others who understand.

Advice pages

We have recently added advice pages to our website to help individuals searching for information, needing to complete online forms or just wanting to keep up to date with what's going on with older people legislation changes. Often the hardest thing is finding the right website, or the relevant pages - here it's done for you. These days if you're not careful you can easily be directed to an 'advice service' which charges for their assistance When you can do it yourself/with the advice team's assistance online.

We hope that this will assist our own advice team with more people able to investigate their own issues.

May we take this opportunity to thank our advice volunteers for all of the good work they do on our behalf - with even the CAB directing enquiries to us these days!

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Advertise With Us

If you're a local business looking to reach older people across Stourbridge & Halesowen, Age Concern Matters could be the perfect place to showcase your services.

For £50, you can feature a small article or advert in a single edition, helping you connect directly with our engaged local readership.
Perhaps include a voucher as a little encouragement!

Age Concern Matters

Email: acsh@org.uk • Call: 01384 390065





All the world's a stage

As many of you know, our main hall has a stage that's rarely used these days. We're now exploring ways to bring it back into full use — we believe it could be a great opportunity to generate extra income that can be reinvested into the charity's work.

We'll keep you posted as plans develop... so watch this space!

Activities focus

In each future edition, we'd like to shine a spotlight on different groups and clubs. If you'd like to write your own piece (up to one page), please get in touch.

This is your chance to promote your group, highlight the fantastic activities you're running, and share a few photos too. Just remember to get permission forms signed — these are available from Kim.

Interested? Email info@acsh.org.uk or leave a note at the Elton Centre addressed to Age Concern Matters.

Please Remember Us

We're a small, independent charity with no external funding — everything we do is powered by the kindness of our community. Quite simply, your support keeps our doors open for the older people who rely on us.

Every week, we provide friendship, activities, advice, and a safe place for those aged 55+ who may otherwise feel alone. But we can only continue with your help.

How You Can Support Us

- Please attend our clubs and activities. Every visit helps us continue offering companionship and connection.
- Please use our café. Buying our good-quality, affordable food and drink directly supports our work.
- Please buy raffle tickets and visit our tabletop sales and fayres. These small moments of support add up to a big impact.
- Please consider a monthly donation. A regular gift — even a few pounds — helps us plan ahead and ensures we can keep providing vital support all year round. You can set this up through our website's donation button (www.acsh.org.uk).
- Please remember us in your will. Gifts in wills are a lifeline for small charities like ours. If you choose to leave a gift, please ensure it clearly states 'Age Concern Stourbridge & Halesowen'.
- Please encourage local businesses to support us. Whether through sponsorship, fundraising, or choosing us as their charity of the year, local companies can make a huge difference to older people in our community.
- Use the donation button on our website to give a one off gift - or do it the old fashioned way by dropping it into the Elton Centre.

Your Donation Goes Further Than You Think

No matter how small your donation, it makes a real difference — from keeping someone warm and welcomed with a hot drink, to helping us run activities that reduce loneliness.

We use every penny responsibly and directly to support older people in Stourbridge and Halesowen.

And if you tick Gift Aid when donating online, the government adds 25% extra at no cost to you, helping your kindness stretch even further.



Food Bank Vouchers

Did you know that Age Concern Stourbridge & Halesowen holds a small supply of food bank vouchers to help anyone facing a financial crisis?

This support is open to everyone — not just those aged 55 and over — who finds themselves in need of a little help.

You need to bring official proof of who you are and where you live (must be in the Dudley Borough) and your financial situation, you'll also be asked to talk through your situation with one of our advice team members. This conversation is free and completely confidential.

Simply drop in to see the advice team Monday to Friday, between 10 am and 1 pm. If possible, bring along any information that might help us tailor the assistance we offer.

Let's Get Talking to Fight Loneliness



Feeling lonely or just fancy a friendly chat?

Join us at **Talkin' Tables**— a safe, welcoming space to meet new people & share conversation.



We meet every Monday and Tuesday, 10:30–11:30am in our café.
Look for a table with an invitation sign, take a seat, and make yourself
... comfortable. ...



All we ask is kindness, patience, and respect for everyone taking part.

Age Concern Matters Needs You!



Would you like to contribute to our publication?

Be a roaming reporter, share a letter, or send an old recipe or rhyme!

Email info@ACSH.org.uk or leave a note at the **Elton Centre** marked
"Age Concern Matters editorial."

We can even help with online training if you'd like!



**So come on—get involved!
Age Concern Matters needs you!**

Are you following us?

If you use Facebook why not start following us? We promote events, keep you up to date of things that are happening and post good news.

Go to /EltonCentreStourbridge and simply select 'follow'.

Remember to share postings and like 👍 or love ❤️ any you're particularly interested in.



Falls Prevention Service (Dudley): Dudley Council's Fall Prevention Team can help anyone over 65 who lives in the borough/is registered with a Dudley doctor who has had a fall or is worried about falling. They can carry out an assessment, offer help and advice and help restore confidence. They may refer you to other services to provide additional support. Call them on 0300 555 0055 or email fallsspa@dudley.gov.uk to arrange an appointment.



Wordsearch words

This edition's word search features the activities currently held by Age Concern Stourbridge & Halesowen. Why not test your knowledge first and find the sessions you already know!

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Activities | 9. Yoga | 17. Conditioning |
| 2. Lunch | 10. Lymph yoga | 18. Mediation |
| 3. Talkin tables | 11. Harmonica | 19. Inner tiger |
| 4. Flow motion | 12. Pilates | 20. Slimming |
| 5. Line dancing | 13. Mobility flow | |
| 6. Neat feet | 14. Art | |
| 7. Bowls | 15. Craft | |
| 8. Digi Dudley | 16. Fitness | |

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