

AGE UK WILTSHIRE

News and Views

CEO Message - Sarah Cardy

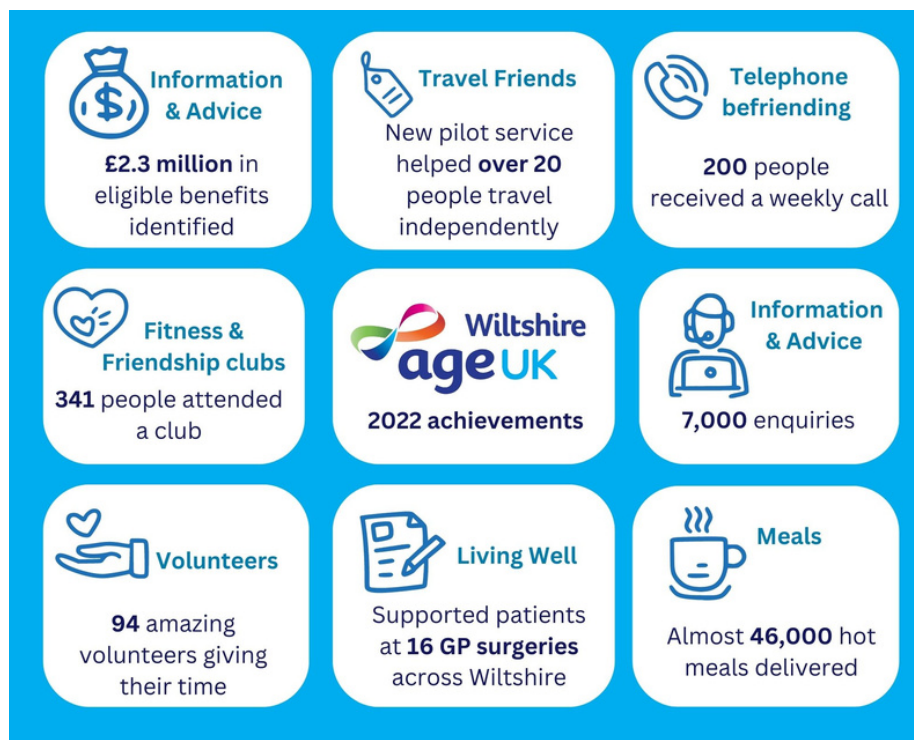
Welcome to our very first external newsletter, highlighting the latest news and updates from Age UK Wiltshire.

Each quarter, we will be sharing updates, advice, and success stories from older adults who have benefited from our services. We will also be showcasing our dedicated volunteers and community partners who make our work possible.

At Age UK Wiltshire, we believe in the power of community and are committed to building strong partnerships with local organisations and stakeholders to create a supportive network for older adults in the community.

We're grateful for your continued support as we promote the well-being and independence of older adults and help them to love later life. We hope you enjoy our newsletter and connecting with us and we'd like to thank you for being a part of our community.

I also want to take this opportunity to highlight the amazing work done last year, with some stats on how we made a huge impact on people's lives:



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News and updates

Age UK Southampton Merger

We are excited to confirm that Age UK Wiltshire and Age UK Southampton have joined forces to continue to offer much needed support to older people in their local areas!

Our organisations have a long history of providing vital services and support to older people to help improve their quality of later life. By combining our resources and expertise, we believe we can have an even greater impact on the lives of our clients. This expansion enables a strengthened service provision, shared learning, and the potential to develop new and important services, identified by older people within their local communities. The collaboration will ensure that the rising demand for frontline services and support will be met, not only in the Wiltshire and Swindon area but across the Southampton area.

We are committed to ensuring a smooth transition and to keeping all stakeholders informed throughout the process. We believe this merger will create new opportunities for growth and collaboration, and we are excited to embark on this new chapter together.

The Merger took place on the 1st April 2023 and our gratitude goes to all our supporters, volunteers, and staff who have helped make this merger possible. We look forward to continuing to work together to make a positive impact in the lives of older adults.

Our future development plans for this year

We have ambitious plans to open **three charity retail shops**, which will become hubs across Wiltshire! We're working in partnership with another charity to use their expertise as consultants to help us build a sustainable model.

The Information & Advice service is busy helping many older people combat the cost of living with grants, advice, and benefits information, including making Surviving Winter grants. We're looking at how we can develop new I&A services across Wiltshire and Swindon, including more face-to-face information and advice.

"I couldn't have done this without you, I felt so dejected when the lady said I wasn't entitled and I'm glad you helped me see that I was. Thanks for helping with the phone call, it felt so reassuring."

The Meals+ Service is currently expanding and building on routes in Melksham, Corsham, and Chippenham. Having provided a nutritious meals service to clients in Wiltshire and Swindon, including some routes in Bath & North East Somerset for many years, we are now expanding into the South Cotswolds as a natural next step in the growth of the service.

We have also been working hard to help the NHS by providing meals for those coming home from hospital, as part of their discharge plans.

"We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the assistance that you have given us. It has allowed our dad to stay in his home for a great deal longer than we thought, which was his wish. Your staff have kept his spirits up and I know he has really enjoyed having a visitor each lunch time."

We started a pilot **Travel Friends service** last year which has been a great success. Volunteers have worked 1:1 with older people who needed more confidence to travel independently and have been able to support them on their journeys to shops, appointments, visiting groups and getting out and about.

We hope the pilot has shown the value of such a service and are excited about future possibilities!

"What a wonderful service. The volunteer who helped me was just great and so very helpful. I am now confident to travel on my own."

We're now working with Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council, and are leading the Melksham Community Support service, who have a number of volunteers and are already supporting a group of older people.

We have recruited a new Melksham Community Support Senior Project Worker and can't wait to see what we can do in this area!

Last year, our **Big Knit** campaign was incredibly successful and our knitting warriors knitted an amazing 40,000 hats! We hit our target and were given £10,000 from Innocent Smoothies. We will be running another campaign this year, and will be updating our social media channels with more information soon.

If you have any questions about our services, please just get in touch.
 Sarah Cardy, CEO: sarah.cardy@ageukwiltshire.org.uk
 Kate Brooks, Operations Manager: kate.brooks@ageukwiltshire.org.uk



Service Spotlight - Fitness & Friendship Clubs

We were delighted to welcome so many new volunteers to the Fitness & Friendship team in 2022 and our local clubs are increasing!

We have introduced a **F&F club to Marlborough** and to **Bradford-on Avon**. The Fitness & Friendship team will also be starting some new work providing classes to sheltered housing schemes.

Watch [Jenny](#) and [Colin](#) talk about how attending their local club has helped them make new friends and improve their mobility!



Partnership working

WASP - Wiltshire and Swindon Sport

Age UK Wiltshire and WASP enjoy a collaborative relationship, and work in partnership for the shaping, resourcing, delivery and monitoring of agreed joint projects, primarily our popular Fitness & Friendship Clubs.

Working together, we encourage the sustainable growth and impact of the AUKW Fitness and Friendship Clubs, while also promoting the aims and priorities of WASP in relation to inactive and less active older people.

WASP also supports the cost of staffing/venues for these local clubs and both organisations publicise each-other's ongoing campaigns.

You can read our guest blog written for their #5WaysToBeWell campaign on how our Fitness & Friendship Clubs help older people stay active and connect with others in their community [HERE](#).



Invaluable Volunteers!

We are so grateful to all our volunteers (**almost 100 of them!**) who dedicate their valuable time to Age UK Wiltshire and our clients.

Without them, we couldn't do as much as we are doing! If you are looking for a volunteering opportunity and want to support **a local charity, helping older people in Wiltshire, Swindon and Southampton**, then please get in touch via our website and complete a volunteer application form. We would love to have you on board!

Volunteer Story

"My name is Sue England, aged 71 years young. I have been attending Age UK Fitness and friendship club in Amesbury. Within six months I was invited to become a volunteer. I was thrilled to be asked and was very keen to help out. I enjoy the gentle exercises which keep my muscles moving. It's a nice friendly atmosphere.

I like volunteering because it gives me the opportunity to meet new friends and the club gives me purpose and self worth. I enjoy the gentle exercises and the tai chi that help keep me moving. I would recommend anyone to join our club and see what fun we have."



Grants and Awards

We would like to acknowledge the generous support received from Town and Parish Councils, that have contributed to the continued running of our Information & Advice service or our Fitness & Friendship Clubs. Thank you to the following:

Amesbury Town Council
Calne Town Council
Chippenham Town Council
Corsham Town Council

Devizes Town Council
Marlborough Town Council
Malmesbury Town Council
Melksham Town Council

Melksham Without Parish Council
Tidworth Town Council
Trowbridge Town Council
Warminster Town Council

Thanks also go to the Asda Foundation for their generous donation to use towards funding the Meals+ service in Melksham, allowing us to reach older people in the Melksham community who are able to maintain their independence with the support of our meals service. We would like to thank Emma Scott, ASDA Community Champion for her help with the application.

Let's talk about: Benefits

Our I&A team do an amazing job of helping older people find out what extra income they're entitled to and what support is available to them, which is especially important with the rising costs of living. We are able to support clients in applying for benefits, including Attendance Allowance, which often have long and complex forms to complete.

We also have a Benefits Calculator that can be found [HERE](#)

Those who are in receipt of benefits may have noticed a change in rates for this new financial year. More information on the new rates can be found [HERE](#)

If you'd like to signpost anyone to our Information & Advice Team, please refer them to our website where a request form can be completed.

