

## Newsletter May 2017

I have just been reading an information leaflet from Age UK which is about the connection between social contact and brain function. The article points out the importance of keeping up our ties to friends and family and taking part in social activities in later life. According to the Global Council on Brain Health it may help us stay sharp as we age. It is not unusual for social networks to shrink as we age, but there are things we can do to improve the quality of relationships. We can join a club, class or social group to meet new people or focus on relationships or activities that we enjoy. Computer based communication can be useful and can help to expand our social world, as well as to maintain existing contacts.

People vary in the degree to which they seek out the company of other people but we share the fundamental need to interact with others. A wealth of evidence shows that positive relationships and shared activities contribute to our wellbeing. Often we can find that there are plenty of activities in our local communities that can offer us what we need in this respect however it can be more difficult for some people for a variety of reasons. For those with their own transport or with access to public transport there are plenty of opportunities to join groups and clubs (I hold details of some of them). It is more difficult for those who live in isolated areas or who have mobility problems. I will list a few possibilities below:

- There are a few lunch clubs where transport is available from some areas.
- In some rural areas small groups of people have got together at each other's homes to hold informal groups, for example, a book club or a knitting group, the possibilities for this are endless.
- There is a free **Befriending Service** that can offer a visit to a person on a regular basis for a chat and a cup of tea. The service is for people who are 70+ and live alone. Also volunteer befrienders are always wanted, and this is a great way to meet others in the community. Tel: **07810 630 167**.
- Or maybe try the free telephone friendship service, "**A Call in Time**" from Age UK. Tel: **0844 225 0320**. For people who are 60+ and live alone.
- Sometimes a good old chat can help if we are feeling a bit fed up. There is **Silverline**, Tel: **08004 70 80 90**, which is a helpline for older people, open every day and night of the year. They have no strict age limit.

If you would like any further information from me please contact me on the number below and I will do what I can to help.

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