



# About Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire

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Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire is the local consumer champion promoting choice and influencing the provision of high quality health, social care and wellbeing services for all across Central Bedfordshire.

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire (HWCB) has significant statutory powers to ensure that the voice of the consumer is strengthened and heard by those who commission, deliver and regulate health and care services. HWCB engages and consults with all sections of the local population so that a wide cross-section of views are heard, understood and acted upon. Everything we say and do is informed by our connections to local people and our expertise is grounded in their experience.

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire is one of three local Healthwatch in the County of Bedfordshire and belong to a network of local Healthwatch. Healthwatch England leads, supports and guides the Healthwatch network which is made up of the national body and local Healthwatch across each of the 152 local authority areas in England.

Healthwatch is the only body looking solely at people's experience across all health and social care. As a statutory watchdog our role is to ensure that local health and social care services, and the local decision-makers put the experiences of people at the heart of their care.

**healthwatch**  
Central Bedfordshire

# Content overview....



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# Introduction

This is the fifth year that Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire has celebrated International Older People’s Day by holding an Older People’s Festival in the County. We do this by bringing together organisations and community groups that provide advice, information, guidance and services to support older people at our very popular event.

The Festival is held annually and is designed to celebrate the contribution that older people make to society. The theme for this year was 'Stepping into the Future'.



Bev Fye and stand for Aragon Housing

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire (HWCB) facilitates and delivers the Festival in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), Aragon Housing Association, and Flitwick Town Council. Additional sponsorship this year was kindly provided by Circle MSK.

The Festival continues to attract a large audience from across Bedfordshire and the surrounding areas.

A map showing the geographical range of those who attended can be found on Page 16.



The Team from Circle MSK

Exhibitors invited to the Festival join us each year to display their material, share information and advice about the services they offer, and to talk to the many visitors attending the event.

This year we welcomed representatives from different service areas within Central Bedfordshire Council; Age UK, Aragon Housing Association and their residents’ group ROAR; Carers in Beds; Circle MSK, and many more. Additional stand holders included local community groups, craft stands and holistic services.

In response to feedback from visitors last year, we invited exhibitors displaying handmade goods, food and jewellery. A full list of exhibitors can be found on Pages 13-15. With over 330 visitors to the Festival for Older People, 2017 has proved to be the most popular and successful yet.



# The Festival for Older People 2017 - at a glance

Over 330 visitors to the event



The event was supported by 19 volunteers



There were 48 exhibitors over 42 stands



**Have your say**

78 People gave feedback about the event by filling out evaluation forms

The Macmillan Cake stand raised over £190 for the charity

**WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT**

110 visitors took advantage of the health checks on offer





# Summary

*The planning for this eagerly anticipated event begins in the Summer when HWCB's partner organisations and volunteers meet on a regular basis to share ideas and co-ordinate the pre-activity required to ensure exhibitors and the general public hear about and are aware of the Festival for Older People.*

*This includes poster design, distribution and generally publicising the event.*

The Planning Committee for 2017 included volunteers from Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire and Central Bedfordshire Council. Posters were distributed to sheltered housing schemes, Parish Councils, housing and care providers, libraries and GP practices. In addition to advertising in local newsletters, bulletins and websites, HWCB also utilised social media to regularly advertise the event to ensure maximum attendance.

Our staff were also invited on to a local radio station, 'Biggles FM', where they were given the opportunity to promote the Festival. Following the interview this broadcast was shared on Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire's website, Twitter and Facebook.

You can hear this broadcast if you click on the link below:

<http://healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk/dee-and-dave-festival-for-older-people>



Alan Waring at Biggles FM Radio

When visitors were asked how they found out about the Festival, word of mouth proved to be the most successful, with networks of service users and carers sharing and promoting news about the Festival.

With a view to encouraging the attendance of local residents, who due to their frailty or disability would not be able to travel independently to the event, HWCB staff and volunteers utilised local reputable taxi and coach companies along with the Transport Services at Central Bedfordshire Council. HWCB would like to thank CBC Transport Service, and their drivers and volunteers, for their support.

Exhibitors occupied five rooms at the Rufus Centre in Flitwick, including the main hall (Lockyer Suite). The Stocksfield Room hosted Mindfulness sessions and Skin Care workshops and the Woodfield Room was again transformed into the popular 'Wellbeing Room'.

In addition to healing and hand massage, visitors could have their blood pressure taken and undergo blood sugar testing. This was undertaken by two trained professionals who gave advice on follow-up if appropriate.



Elvince 'wows' the audience

In addition to the exhibitors, we had a full programme of entertainment including Seated Pilates, Mindfulness and 'Elvince', who gave an energetic and enthusiastic performance entertaining visitors, also kindly gave his time and skills for free and offered hair care and grooming tips to male visitors.

The success of this year's focussed promotional activity has impacted considerably on the number of visitors. In 2017 we saw an increase of 20% on last year's numbers.

Free light refreshments were provided throughout the day and the refreshment stand was in constant demand. One volunteer on the stand estimated that over 600 hot drinks had been handed out to visitors and stand holders.

HWCB invited local Councillors to the event and the Deputy High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Vinod Tailor, and Rosie Gutteridge, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, spent time talking with visitors and stand holders.

Commenting on the Festival, the Deputy High Sheriff said '*I think it is a great way to reach out to people in the community and it brings a huge amount of awareness*'.

The full interview with Vinod Tailor, recorded on the day, can be heard as a 'sound clip' on HWCB's website blog:

<https://healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk/festival-olderpeople>



Deputy Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Vinod Tailor

In addition Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Rosie Gutteridge, addressed the audience to introduce the Festival and talked about the '*marvellous turnout*' and the '*stimulating and inspiring event*'.

Roger Barnard, a member of Central Bedfordshire's Older People's Network (OPN) followed the theme of the event, '*Stepping into the Future*', and shared his experiences of keeping active and engaged as a mature gentleman and how this had had a positive effect on his wellbeing.

Richard Compton made a welcome return this year as our Compere and again he ensured visitors were kept informed about the programme of entertainment throughout the day.

'Elvince', an Elvis tribute singer, was very well received and kept the audience entertained singing Elvis and Rat Pack favourites - much to the delight of the audience. Visitors, stand holders, volunteers and staff alike joined in by singing along with the music and dancing to familiar songs.



Singing along with Elvince

In addition to the entertainment programme, visitors were encouraged to talk to the representative from Mary Kay about skin care. It was also suggested that they try the Mindfulness sessions and Seated Pilates. One visitor, who had been forced to give up Pilates due to not being able to manage the floor exercises, was delighted to find that she could restart her Pilates whilst seated and was looking forward to attending future sessions.

The health advice stands drew a great deal of interest and the blood pressure monitor, kindly donated for our use by the Barton House Group Practice.

Eighty blood pressure checks were undertaken on the day. Of these, two visitors were advised to see their GP to discuss the results as soon as possible and a further six visitors were asked to mention the results at their next visit with their GP.

This year, Ingeus, as part of the NHS Diabetes Prevention Scheme, offered blood sugar testing to visitors. Over 30 visitors participated with many others asking for advice or to learn more about the scheme. Everyone who participated in the health screenings on offer felt they were very worthwhile. One visitor commented:

*"I was delighted to have my diabetes checked because I've been trying to find someone to do that for a long time. Because my family has it, I thought I needed to do that. It's very low so I am going to live. I am fit and healthy, isn't that lovely?"*

Many visitors entered into the Festival Quiz, which included questions about the French Monarchy, the Marx Brothers, and the Beatles. A full list of those who donated prizes for the winners of the quiz can be found on Page 15.



Self referring for the MSK service

We were joined at the Festival by a staff member from Healthwatch Suffolk, accompanied by their commissioner, to experience the event. They had recently heard of the Festival for Older People but were unsure what to expect. They commented:

*'We have been amazed by the amount of visitors and stand holders. It is a fantastic, lively event, lots going on, very vibrant atmosphere and there is something for everyone, not just in terms of information and advice but health stands too, and the entertainment is going down really well'.*

*As a direct result of their attendance Healthwatch Suffolk and their commissioners are keen to deliver a similar event in their area and will be meeting with HWCB colleagues in order to gain insight into the whole planning process.*



**Rosie Gutteridge**



**Vinod Tailor**

Our special guests, who opened this year's Festival for Older People on 6th October, were Deputy Lieutenant, Rosie Gutteridge MBE JP DL and High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Vinod Tailor. Both were very impressed with the level and variety of activities and information available to the general public and commented as follows:

*'As an older person living in Bedfordshire, the Annual Festival for Older People is an event not to be missed.*

*I was blown away by the number and variety of stalls as well as the advice on offer for those seeking practical help, information and support. More than 40 carefully selected stalls reflected brilliantly the needs and interest of older people.*

*Through the day visitors from all over Bedfordshire had free access to experts giving advice on everything from healthcare, mobility aids, housing and charities, to holidays and even choosing the right pair of shoes. The event, which attracted more than 300 visitors is a unique showcase of what is available in the county to support older people and deserves to go from strength to strength. It was a privilege to be invited'.*

**Rosie Gutteridge MBE JP DL**

High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Vinod Tailor commented as follows:

*'This kind of festival brings together people from all walks of life and brings a huge amount of awareness. The turnout is brilliant and the Festival is a great way to reach out to people in the community. I think people will really benefit.*

*The visit certainly enlightened me of the many organisations that support the elderly and also showed how the older people loved being together. It was a fun and informative day'.*



# Feedback

Visitors and exhibitors were encouraged to provide feedback about the Festival by completing an evaluation form or by leaving comments on the Graffiti Wall in the reception area of the venue. Feedback is always welcome and taken into account in the planning of future event.



The infographic above illustrates the graffiti wall feedback



42% of visitors to the event provided their feedback by completing the evaluation form which showed high satisfaction levels across all sections. From the information given on the forms it was established that the youngest visitor was in their fifties with the oldest being in their late nineties.

A few exhibitors gave 'real time' feedback on the day answering a few short questions about the impact of their attendance. All said they were able to provide information and advice, with many taking referrals for further work with visitors. Following the Festival 36% of exhibitors returned evaluation forms which showed very high satisfaction levels.

Feedback about the Festival is received and reviewed and we use all of the feedback to inform our future events. In addition to positive comments about the Festival, some visitors were less positive and stated the following:

- Busy, packed areas and limited seating
- little space to eat lunch, with some visitors having to use the stairs
- more services/organisations wanting to join with limitations on the number of spaces available for stands

To address some of these issues, HWCB is considering the following, which will be further explored with the Festival Planning Committee:

- Increase venue space
- Different lunchtime options

In response to feedback in previous years we have sought to develop the Festival to better meet the needs of the audience.

The graphic below highlights the feedback received in previous years and how it has helped to improve the effectiveness of the Festival.

**You said in previous years -**

- Something for 'younger' older people on skincare
- Mindfulness away from the busy stall areas
- Diabetes checks

**In 2017 we -**

- Invited a local skincare professional to provide a demonstration
- Held Mindfulness sessions in a quiet room
- Ingeus provided diabetes checks with information and advice



# Volunteers

Many volunteers gave their time, experience, and expertise as part of the Planning Committee for the Festival and contributed to its success.

On the day of the event, volunteers greeted visitors on their arrival and guided them to different stands in other rooms within the venue.



Volunteers directing visitors

Throughout the day volunteers also handed out information at reception, including the programme for the day and the well stocked goody bags. Volunteers were also on hand to guide visitors on and off the transport buses and the refreshment stand, as well as encouraging visitors to engage in the activities and entertainment.

Volunteers also encouraged visitors to give feedback about the event using evaluation forms and the Graffiti Board. As well as volunteers from HWCB, Central Bedfordshire Council, and Aragon Housing, we were pleased to welcome volunteers from Healthwatch Luton, who were very supportive and helpful to visitors on the day.

Macmillan Cancer Support's cake stand was, again, run by Aragon volunteers, Claudette and Mickey, who were happy to promote Macmillan in their bright green T-shirts.



Claudette and Mickey supporting Macmillan

*"Volunteers really do make a difference! A huge thank to all the volunteers that made the Festival for Older People such a huge success"*

**Thank  
You**



# Festival Exhibitors

## Information and Advice

### Circle MSK

- Operational and Quality Assurance Staff
- Physiotherapist



## Health and Wellbeing

- Blood Pressure Checks
- Elvince - Barber Service
- Gentle Touch Healing
- Hand Massage by Iona
- Ingeus
- Mary Kay

## Central Bedfordshire Council

- Travel Choices, Transport Strategy
- Housing Solutions Team
- Active Lifestyles Team
- Operational Staff
- Occupational Therapy
- Customer Finance
- Direct Payments
- Countryside Access
- Tenant Engagement
- Trading Standards
- Independent Living Team
- Libraries
- Flu Immunisation and Staying Well



## Aragon

- Wellbeing co-ordinator
- ROAR-Residents Representatives
- Operational Staff





## General

- Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG)
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)
- Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Carers in Bedfordshire
- Community Matron Service
- Disability Resource Centre
- Flitwick Leisure Centre
- Home Instead
- McFarland Homes
- Multiple Sclerosis Society
- Older People's Network
- POhWER
- Respite at Home
- Royal British Legion
- Savvi Travel
- Sight Concern
- SSAFA - The Armed Forces Charity
- Voluntary and Community Action
- Wiltshire Farm Foods



## Market Stalls

- Bob's Bespoke Soaps
- Helen's Handmade Treasures
- Olde Sweet Shoppe
- Redfin Models
- Rememories Crystals
- Anna's Kitchen



# Thank You

The Festival has benefitted from a number of providers, who each contributed to the success of the event.

In addition to sponsorship from Central Bedfordshire Council, colleagues from various service areas of CBC helped and supported the event by being part of the planning committee and also volunteering on the day, helping to guide visitors and assisting with refreshments. HWCBC was able to secure additional sponsorship from the following:

- Circle MSK
- Aragon Housing
- Flitwick Town Council

As well as the financial support we received we would like to say a big thank you to the following organisations for their generous donations for 'our goody bags':

- Tesco - Flitwick for bottles of water
- Ingeus - for pedometers and tape measures



Bob Travers & his salt lamps

Thank you also to the organisations and individuals that donated prizes for the winners of the Festival Quiz:

- Bob Travers of Bespoke Soaps
- Poplars Garden Centre
- Number Fourteen, Ampt Hill

For providing delicious cakes and other sweet treats, our thanks go to:

- Catering Students at Central Bedfordshire College
- Mealtime at Wrest Park, Silsoe
- Dave Simpson (volunteer) who supplied a wide range of home-baked cakes and muffins

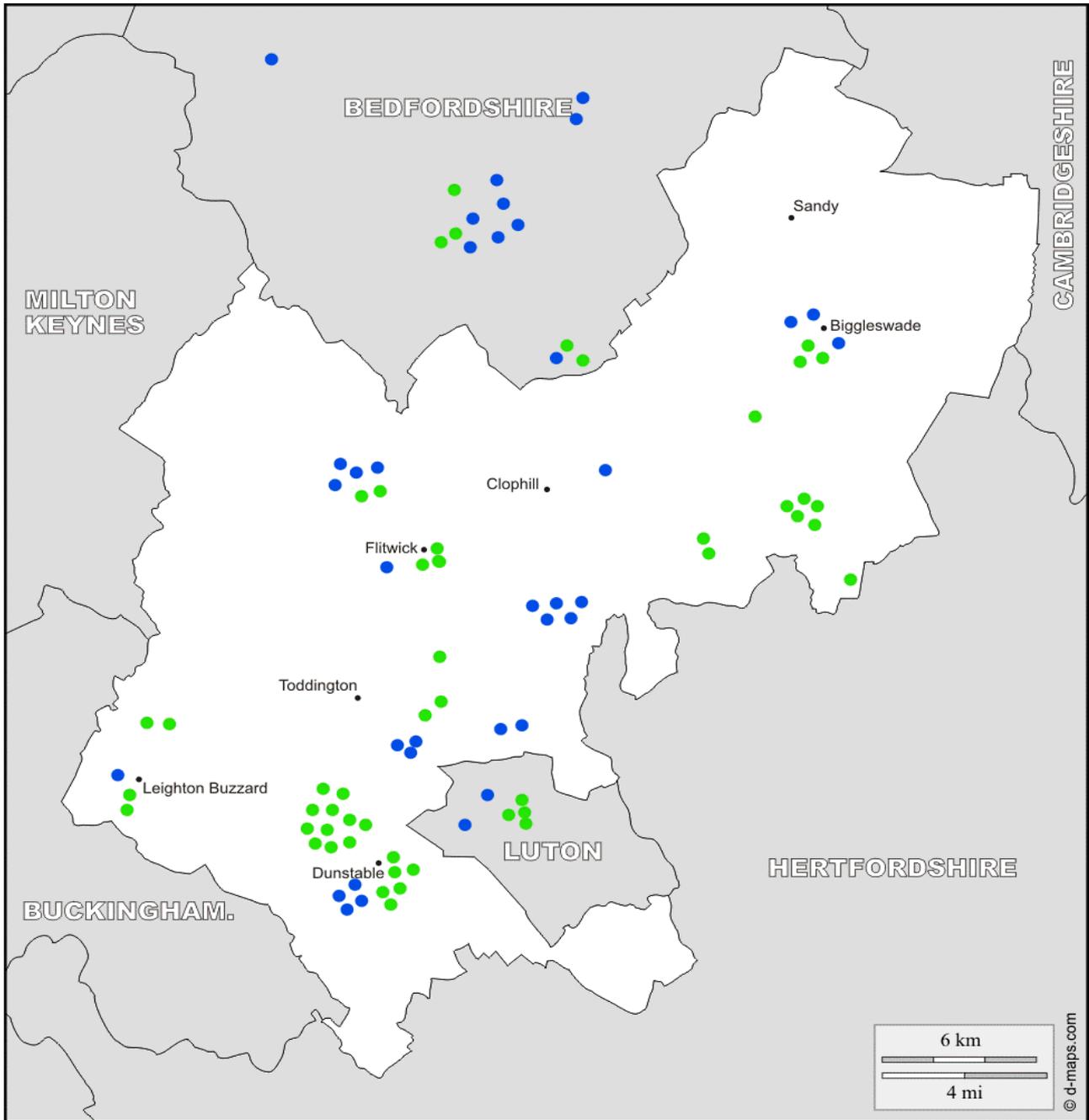
All cakes were sold in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. The stand proved very popular, as always, and this year raised over £190 for this charity.

Thank you also to the Bluebird Care team for supporting the Festival by kindly opening their doors to our visitors and offering refreshments and a place to sit and talk.

Finally, our special thanks go to Rosie Gutteridge, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, and Vinod Tailor, Deputy Sheriff of Bedfordshire who took time out of their busy schedules to support the Festival.



# Our Visitors



## KEY:

- Visitors
- Exhibitors

A number of providers came from out of County, including Oxfordshire, Wellingborough and Hertfordshire.



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