

Bywyd newydd yn ...
Life begins at ...

CARMARTHENSHIRE
SIR GÂR

50+

A magazine for the 50+ in Carmarthenshire

Issue 2



Minister Gwenda Thomas and Cllr Kevin Madge

Welcome to issue No.2 of the new 50+ Forum Newsletter. A big thank you to those of you who took part in our recent survey. We have outlined some of the results on pages 2 and 3 of this edition of the newsletter and the information provided will be used by the council and other partner organisations to help us in planning our services for older people in the future.

Wales' Minister for Older People, Gwenda Thomas recently attended the launch of the 50+ Forum in Carmarthen and was full of praise for the efforts being made to give older people a real say in how services are planned in the county. The well attended event at St Peter's Civic Hall was a chance for people over the age of 50 to find out more about the services and opportunities available to them.

The county's 50+ Forum has now signed up more than 1,000 members making it the largest group in the county for older people.

Gwenda Thomas said: "It seems to me that Carmarthenshire is one of the good places to grow older in. I would like to say how much I appreciate the role you play as a local forum. Your forum is the voice of the grass roots. Government and local government must listen if they are to deliver for older people.

"I fully support your efforts to promote positive images of ageing and to ensure that the over 50s can participate and are valued in their communities."

Carmarthenshire County Council Older People's Champion Cllr Kevin Madge told Forum members: "I am looking forward to working with you to improve the lives of older people.

"By joining the Forum people are able to give their views and lead to real improvements in their lives."

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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Survey feedback



The 50+ Partnership has carried out a survey of 50+ Forum members to find out your views on life in Carmarthenshire.

The survey looks at issues such as your levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction

with the county, issues such as crime and public safety, and what your priorities are for the 50+ website and newsletter.

Close to 1,000 survey forms were sent out to Forum members, starting in mid June, and almost 500 of you have responded.

50+ Partnership officers are now analysing the results of the survey which will be used to ensure that the views of people aged 50 and over are taken into account in forming council policies, providing services and influencing partner organisations.

Kevin Madge

Living in Carmarthenshire

How satisfied are you with Carmarthenshire as a place to live?

The overwhelming majority of you are happy with the County as your home.

When asked how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the county as a place to live, 96 per cent of you responded positively with 54 per cent saying that you were very satisfied and 42 per cent saying that you were fairly satisfied.

We then asked you whether you thought that Carmarthenshire was a friendly, an attractive, a healthy and a safe place to live. Again, the results were positive – 97 per cent of you agreed it was attractive, 92 per cent agreed it is a healthy place and 92 per cent agreed the county is a safe place.

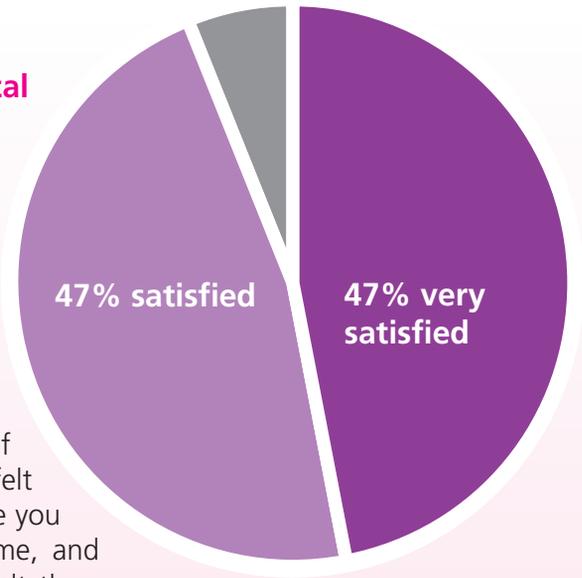


Community Safety

How safe do you feel?

Most of you told us that you were happy with your local area and feel safe living there.

When asked how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with your local area as a place to live, 94 per cent of you said that you were satisfied (47 per cent very satisfied and 47 per cent satisfied). Over the last two years, the majority of you thought that your local area has stayed the same.



Over 99 per cent of you said that you felt safe in the area where you live during the daytime, and 85 per cent of you felt the same way during the night time.

In order to determine what types of crime and disorder you would most like to see tackled in your area we asked you to prioritise problem areas. 'Alcohol related crime' came top of the list as the area most frequently chosen as high ranking. Following 'alcohol related crime' came 'speeding' and then 'vandalism'.

Just over four fifths of you (81 per cent) were unaware that you can report incidents of anti-social behaviour to the Council's Contact Centre on 01267234567. (Please note that criminal incidents of anti-social behaviour should always be reported to the police).

Future Development

What would you like to see in future issues of this newsletter?

We are keen to develop the 50+ website and future newsletters and therefore in Survey 1 we asked you to prioritise your information needs. 'Health and well-being' came top of the list as the area most frequently chosen as high ranking. Following 'health and well-being' came 'home & local services' and then 'travel & transport'. The full prioritised list is detailed below.

Priority	
1	Health and Well-Being
2	Home & local services
3	Travel & transport
4	Crime, security and legal advice
5	Leisure, learning & work
6	What's on
7	Voluntary, support and community groups
8	Financial information
9	Shopping & Consumer advice
10	Special offers

Action

50+ Champion Cllr Kevin Madge said: We will work in partnership to address all the issues raised in helping to improve our communities, making Carmarthenshire a better place to live.

We will develop the 50+ website and newsletter, ensuring that the information provided is what residents want.

Energy and the home

The Carmarthenshire Home Energy Advice Service and energy advice pack were launched earlier this year to tell households what they can do to save energy and cut down on fuel bills.

Our partner organisation Miller Pattison will be visiting all properties in the county to assess homes for insulation work – including loft and cavity wall insulation. This will be free to many people, including over 70's and those on a wide range of welfare benefits. We will be writing to households in areas Miller Pattison will be working in to tell them about the scheme.

Ask for identification and make sure callers are who they say they are – if in doubt ring us to confirm.

We can also direct referrals to the Welsh Assembly Government's Home Energy Efficiency Scheme – where people over 60 will qualify for



at least £500 grant towards home energy efficiency for things such as repairs to a heating system which has broken down, or replacing solid fuel heating with a more efficient oil

or gas system.

For further information contact energy efficiency adviser Graham Harries on 01554 742254.

Cut your bills

Are you paying too much council tax or rent? You needn't be.

Around 17,500 households in Carmarthenshire are benefiting from reductions (with many paying nothing) due to the level of their income.

What is surprising is the fact that according to Government statistics, many, many more people across the UK are not getting the reductions they are entitled to.

Some people may not realise that reductions are available; others may feel reluctant to apply or feel the process is too complicated.

Help and advice is always at hand. The council even has a team of people that can call out to help complete the application so no one should be put off from getting the reduction they are entitled to.



If you want more information, simply telephone the Council's Benefits Section on 01554 742100.

Alternatively, call into your nearest Customer Service Centre at:

- 3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen
- Ty Elwyn, Llanelli
- Town Hall, Iscennen Road, Ammanford

Beware cold callers

Trading Standards is warning that it is common practice for some Energy Provider Companies to call uninvited at consumers' homes.

Pressure tactics may be used in order to induce the customer into switching providers. Whilst the deal may sound attractive, Trading Standards would always advise consumers not to rush into a decision on the doorstep but to shop around for a deal that best suits their circumstances.

Consumers should also be aware that if a contract is entered into at home, they are entitled to a cooling off period.

Pressure sales tactics may now be illegal under new regulations that came into force in May 2008.

For further advice please contact Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06.

Interested in rambling?



Llanelli Festival of Walks chairman Alwyn Williams (right) with fellow Llanelli Rambler Geoff Thomas. Picture Ralph Carpenter.

When Alwyn Williams took up walking as a hobby a few years back he didn't expect to end up climbing in Africa and the Andes.

Mr Williams, who is in his sixties, joined Llanelli Ramblers four years ago when he took up walking as a hobby and is now chairman of Llanelli Festival of Walks.

"Because of the walks I do at the weekend I climbed Kilimanjaro last year as a spin-off and Machu Picchu in the Andes the year before," he said.

He is not alone in finding age irrelevant as more than half the 300 or so members of Llanelli Ramblers are over the age of 50.

Mr Williams said: "We have walks ranging from shorter extremely easy walks to longer walks. The categories are not to do with age but to how fit you feel.

"We have a Monday Club for over-

60s who use their free bus passes to get to and from easy walks of four miles followed by lunch, on Wednesday we have short walks for general ramblers, and on Saturdays and Sundays we have longer walks of up to 15 miles."

The highlight of Llanelli Ramblers' year is the Llanelli Festival of Walks held in May over the Spring Bank Holiday every year since 1995. The 2009 event will concentrate on walks within Carmarthenshire.

Information on Llanelli Ramblers is available at www.llanelliramblers.org.uk

Your Club

If you want to tell people about your club or society through the 50 plus Newsletter contact Roger Butler on 01267 224114 or email: RButler@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Learn with Grandma



Two Llandovery grandmothers have started producing books to teach children English as a first or second language.

Valerie Wood-Gaiger MBE and her friend and neighbour Carroll Nunnerley, who live near each other in Myddfai, set up Grandma's Stories Ltd and published Valerie's first book *The Ice Journey* in January 2007, the month she became a great grandmother.

Valerie said: "Living in a Welsh speaking village made us realise how important it was to publish in dual languages."

They ran a pilot project in Latvian/English, and are also publishing in Welsh and English.

The two have set up a not for profit company Learn with Grandma after learning that there are more grandparents than ever before caring for their grandchildren on a regular basis.

"We want to help them make the most of the precious time they spend with their grandchildren; to have fun and pass on a love of learning," Valerie said.

Learning - it's good for your health!

Learning can be fun, help you make new friends or gain qualifications. It is also very good for your health.

Courses such as Yoga, Keep Fit, Pilates and Tai Chi have obvious benefits. Complementary therapies such as Reflexology can help with ailments and maintain good health. But whether it's Arts, Languages, Computing or other subjects, research has shown that learning benefits our physical and mental health.

For more information on Learning Carmarthenshire courses, visit: www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/learningcarmarthenshire or contact Carmarthenshire Direct on 01267 234567

Looking for mentors



Prime Cymru Volunteer Mentoring Scheme
Co-ordinator Hugh Davies with Prime Cymru
Volunteer Mentors

Did you know that the search is on for people in Carmarthenshire to act as mentors for over 50s venturing into business?

The Prince's Initiative for Mature Enterprise in Wales - Prime Cymru - helps Welsh people aged 50 and over return to employment, to start their own businesses and find training or volunteering opportunities. It has offered free advice to over 5,000 people, helping launch over 1,200 businesses and create over 1,800 jobs.

Now Prime Cymru is taking its work further in partnership with Carmarthenshire County Council and needs people skilled in business, finance, recruitment, education and voluntary work to join its team of volunteer mentors in the Carmarthenshire area.

Find out more about Prime Cymru's Volunteer Mentoring Project by calling free on 0800 5874085 or e-mailing: enquiries@prime-cymru.co.uk

Half Price Rail Travel

Did you know that bus pass holders can enjoy half price rail travel on the Heart of Wales Line. It offers a 50 per cent discount on journeys as far north as Llandrindod Wells and as

far south as Swansea, as long as the journey either starts or ends in Carmarthenshire. The scheme is free between October 5 to May 2.

PlusBus Scheme

The PlusBus Scheme was introduced into Llanelli and Carmarthen on September 7. It allows customers to purchase a train ticket and unlimited bus travel around the town in one transaction.

For further details please visit: www.plusbus.info or contact National Rail Enquiries on 08457 484950.

Recycling Surgeries

Did you know that council recycling officers will be holding Recycling Surgeries across Carmarthenshire in October. The surgeries will be held before the Community Network meetings in all six of the Network areas.

For further info please visit: www.thecarmarthenshirepartner-ship.org.uk

Shop Mobility Scheme

It is planned to introduce a Shop Mobility Scheme to Llanelli in the Early New Year to provide motorised scooters which can be booked for hire around the Town Centre.

Recycling and Rubbish Collection

The Recycling scheme has now been rolled out further in the county with more and more households involved in the Blue bag/Green box scheme.

For further details and for information on rubbish collection please contact the Contact Centre on 01267 234567

Crafts Market

Local Craft makers are set to showcase their designs at the town centre market. Jewellery, hand made

cards, animal portraits, rugs handbags, and handmade soaps are amongst the items being displayed. The fayre will take place on October 22 at Guildhall Square, Carmarthen. **For further details contact the Council's Principal Arts Officer Eleri Retallick on 07748 270439.**

Multi-Cultural Awareness Week

This will take place between December 4 and 11 across the county. An open day will be held on 11th December with workshops, exhibitions and fun activities. All welcome. Groups across the county will be invited to attend.

For further information please watch the council's website for updates.

Prize Draw

And the winner is....

Mr Ian Ramsay



Thank you to everyone who took part in our last survey. Completing the surveys takes time and the responses we have received make it clear that you have given each question a great deal of thought.

To show that we appreciate your efforts and as a mark of our thanks, we enter each returned survey into a prize draw. The draw for survey one has taken place and our winner from the Carmarthen area is now £50 richer!