



# WEST OF SCOTLAND SENIORS FORUM

## Monthly Newsbrief for Local Senior's Forums

### 2006 COUNCIL TAX RATES ANNOUNCED

Almost all councils in the West of Scotland have announced their council tax levels for 2006/2007.

Check the table on the right to see how much more you will be paying.

West of Scotland Seniors Forum will continue to put forward the case for a new system to replace the current one as it is not based on the ability to pay, but on the value of your home.

Council Tax bills in Scotland 2006/7		
Council	Average bill	Increase
Argyll and Bute	£1,156	3.49%
East Ayrshire	£1,170	4.9%
East Dunbartonshire	£1,120	3.9%
East Renfrewshire	£1,105	4.9%
Glasgow	£1,213	0%
Inverclyde	£1,206	2.5%
North Ayrshire	£1,125	4.65%
North Lanarkshire	£1,077	3.5%
Renfrewshire	£1,143	4.8%
South Ayrshire	Decision on 09/03	
South Lanarkshire	£1,076	3.46%
West Dunbartonshire	£1,138	2.25%

Average bill is based on Band D figures. Water charges should be added

Lord Turner says we can't afford to raise the state pension or link it to earnings now...  
1m Scottish Pensioners say he's wrong.



WEST OF SCOTLAND SENIORS FORUM

### POSTCARD PENSION CAMPAIGN

West of Scotland Seniors Forum have launched their own postcard campaign (see pictures left), calling for the introduction of a Citizens pension. Please let us know if you receive a response. The text is reprinted below:

Dear Minister

The recent publication of the long awaited Turner report regrettably contained very little of significant immediate benefit to Scotland's existing 1m Pensioners.

Between now and spring 2006 you promised a period of national debate on how the pension system can be reformed, before your department publishes a white paper laying out future government policy on the issue.

I would therefore like to add my voice to that of the WSSF in calling for:

***The introduction of a Citizens Pension now, at the level of the Pension Credit Guarantee and raised annually in line with earnings***

**WEST OF SCOTLAND SENIORS FORUM** *Seniors helping Seniors*

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_

To: Rt Hon. John Hutton MP  
Secretary of State  
Dept for Work & Pensions  
Richwood House  
79 Whitehall  
London SW1A 2NS

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Page 2: Strathclyde Fire & Rescue

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THIS NEWSLETTER SHOULD BE COPIED AND PASSED TO YOUR MEMBERS

FEBRUARY 2006

Every month we plan to highlight a solution to everyday problems that we hear about from our members. This month: **Strathclyde Fire & Rescue Home Fire Safety Visits**

STRATHCLYDE  
FIRE & RESCUE



## HOME FIRE SAFETY VISITS

Local and national fire statistics provide us with evidence that the majority of fire deaths and serious injury from fire occurs to residents within the domestic environment. Currently, firefighters are developing their role to meet the demands of the community by becoming more proactive in preventing fires.

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue have recently launched their new campaign which involves creating a safer community by raising awareness of fire and other safety related matters, carrying out HOME FIRE SAFETY VISITS, particularly to the most vulnerable members of our community.

Our personnel can if you wish call at your home at a time suitable to you in order to provide any or all of the following services:

- Carry out a FREE fire safety check of your home
- Provide and install free smoke alarms (if required)
- Provide FREE fire safety advice and information

**FREEPHONE 0800 0731 999**  
**OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FIRE STATION**

Stopping fires occurring in the first place is the most effective way to save lives and make communities safer. Recognising that it is not possible to stop all fires occurring, the next best approach is to detect any fire hazards and prevent harm by reaching those household(er)s, before there is any significant fire risk to themselves and other members of the community.

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue aim to significantly reduce the debilitating effects that fire has on our communities. This campaign will allow us to target communities and our more vulnerable clients, by providing them with 10 year smoke alarms, advice on fire plans and other appropriate information.



### **SMOKE ALARMS:**

#### **Why should you have one?**

- Not having one could cost you your life.
- 500 lives are lost and thousands of people are injured in UK house fires each year.
- If a fire occurs in your home it can rapidly engulf your house with smoke and flames.

A smoke alarm gives you those precious life saving minutes to put your fire plan into action and get you and your family to safety.

**Remember - a smoke alarm buys you valuable time.**



STRATHCLYDE  
FIRE & RESCUE



## Almost Half of Entitled Pensioners Miss Out on Council Tax Benefit

An analysis of the number of pensioners not claiming council tax benefit show that in 2003/4 alone some two million pensioners did not claim council tax benefit - worth on average £548 each.

For all the years since 1997 the amount of unclaimed council tax benefit adds up to £4,680 million.

In 1997 some 1.2 million pensioners did not claim their council tax benefit, with this figure rising steadily over the intervening years to stand at 2.1 million people in 2003/4.

This means as many as 47 per cent of eligible pensioners are missing out.

### MAKE SURE YOU CLAIM

## CHEAPER TRAVEL INSURANCE?

We can't recommend any individual insurance companies to you but if you are looking for cheaper travel insurance then contact **British Insurance Brokers on 0870 950 1790**. They have details of all insurance brokers throughout the UK and may be able to point you in the right direction. Good Luck!

## BLUE BADGE THEFT



Disability Parking Badges seem to be attracting a large amount of thieves who see them as easy to steal and sell on.

There is talk of an epidemic of misuse and theft throughout the UK. Owners of these badges should take care and be aware that these thefts, despicable as they are, are becoming more common.

In Glasgow checks were carried out on 90 cars in one day and 30 of them were found to be using blue badges that were not for the vehicle registered.

## Health Claim One

### Exercise Reduces Alzheimer's Risk

Research carried out in the United States suggests that regular exercise reduces the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease by up to 40%.

The University of Washington study claims to be the most definitive investigation into the effect of exercise on dementia.

A regular gentle work-out was enough to produce a positive effect - even for people aged over 65. It was suggested that walking for 15 minutes three times a week was enough to cut the risk.

Not only did regular exercise cut the risk of dementia, the results suggested it might also help to delay progression of the condition in people who begin to develop symptoms.

## Health Claim Two

### Sugar Drink Cure for Memory Loss

Drinks with a high sugar content can boost your ability to memorise facts by up to a fifth, according to research carried out by a team of Scottish scientists.

Psychologists from Glasgow Caledonian University discovered, just one bottle or can of a sugar-laden soft drink has a significant effect on the brain's ability to store and retrieve memories

They say anyone facing an exam, speech or any event where the ability to retrieve information accurately and rapidly is important is likely to perform better if they have a sugary drink beforehand.

And, in an age of low-sugar or artificially sweetened drinks, they suggest that too many low-calorie beverages could hamper mental performance.

## NHS Waiting Times Fall or Do They?

A recent report shows that since 2001 the NHS has made significant progress in reducing waiting times. for inpatients, day case and outpatient care for people with waiting time guarantees.

**However the number of patients without waiting time guarantees has increased, meaning that overall, waiting times have changed very little.**

# NOTICEBOARD



## WEST OF SCOTLAND SENIORS FORUM

### MONTHLY ASSEMBLY MEETINGS 2006

All Meetings are held in  
House 6, Geoff Shaw Room, Elmbank Street, Glasgow

• ~~Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2006 @ 11.00am~~ •

• ~~Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2006 @ 11.00am~~ •

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2006 @ 11.00am

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2006 @ 11.00am

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2006 @ 11.00am

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2006 @ 11.00am

All Seniors are welcome.

#### Local Forum News

Please continue to send in your local forum minutes to the office. We are also looking for stories about what your forum is doing. What are you campaigning about and who is speaking at your meetings?

#### Newsbrief by Email

*If you wish to receive a copy of WSSF's monthly Newsbrief by email then let us have your details. You can also download a copy from our website.*

#### NEED HELP OR ADVICE WITH YOUR FORUM

Contact the WSSF Office for, information, training, development support or advice details from our staff.

**COMMUNITY FUND**  
*Lottery money making a difference*

#### WEST OF SCOTLAND SENIORS FORUM NEWSLETTER

##### Remember - This is Your Newsletter!

If there is anything you would like to see in future editions of this newsletter then contact Robert at the West of Scotland Seniors Forum Head Office.

#### West of Scotland Seniors ASSEMBLY MEETING

The next Assembly Meeting will be held on Friday 10th March 2006 in House 6, Elmbank Street, Glasgow at 11.00am. The Speaker is from Tax Help for Older People. **All Seniors Welcome**