

Advice on volunteering

PEOPLE interested in giving up some of their spare time to volunteer are invited to a talk by an expert at Bexhill Library in Western Road.

Every month a 'Volunteering Champion' will be available at the library to answer questions about volunteering and provide advice.

Councillor Chris Dowling, East Sussex County Council lead member for community services, said: "Volunteering is a great way to give back to your community, make friends and learn new skills. These new drop-in sessions at Bexhill Library will make it easier for people to find out more about how volunteering can fit into their lives with an informal chat in a central community venue."

The Volunteering Champion will be available from 1pm to 3pm on July 9, August 13, September 10, October 8 and November 12.

New shadow Cabinet

THE Conservative opposition on Crawley Borough Council has announced its new shadow Cabinet.

Newly appointed group leader Councillor Duncan Crow said the team would be a "strong and credible alternative" to the new Labour majority.

He added: "Our shadow Cabinet will lead on providing the robust challenge that is needed to scrutinise Labour policy and will offer credible alternatives when we feel Labour have got it wrong."

The new Cabinet includes Richard Burrett, deputy leader and housing; Nigel Boxall, customer and corporate services; Duncan Peck, community engagement; Bob Lanzer, planning and economic development; Beryl McCrow, leisure and cultural services and Ken Trussell, environmental services.

Councillor steps down

A COUNCILLOR is stepping down after his spinal injury worsened.

Bob White has stepped down as Rother District Council member for Darwell ward because his injuries have made carrying out his duties "increasingly difficult".

Coun White had served Darwell since May 2011 in a second spell after previously serving between 2003 to 2007. He had been the council's Cabinet member for culture, tourism and leisure.

He becomes the second Rother councillor to stand down in a matter of months after independent councillor John Lee stood down in April.

A by-election for Coun Lee's old ward, Collington, is being held on Thursday, June 12, while a second one is anticipated to find Coun White's replacement.

A SERIOUS case review into the "harrowing" deaths of 19 residents at "Britain's worst care home" has made 34 recommendations to try to prevent further tragedies. But families of the victims believe the report is just the "first rung in the ladder" and a public inquiry and a change in the law are the only ways true justice can be done. Chief reporter EMILY WALKER reports

'WE NEED CHANGE IN LAW'

"THIS doesn't give us any kind of justice."

Linzi Collings' mother Jean Halfpenny died in 2010 after being administered three times her regular dose of the blood-thinning drug Warfarin over 17 days at Orchid View.

The abuse and neglect at the now closed care home in Copthorne, near Crawley, has been scrutinised over recent months in an attempt to learn from mistakes and ensure that care home residents are safeguarded in the future.

Reacting to the report, which was released yesterday, the residents' families have called for the Government to go further – to change the law so those responsible for "institutionalised abuse" and the neglect that contributed to five of the patients' deaths will face criminal charges.

A total of 19 residents' deaths were investigated.

Safeguarding alerts

Patients at the Southern Cross-run Orchid View were abused, mistreated and neglected by staff. But the Care Quality Commission graded the home as good and numerous safeguarding alerts at the home were not acted upon by public services.

Lawyers representing some of the families said only a public inquiry would prevent further care home deaths.

Mrs Collings said: "We can't do anything for our relatives or for the others at the home, but we keep hearing about more and more cases in other homes.

"This sort of thing is happening all over the country and something needs to be done to stop it.

"My mother was from a generation who didn't complain and they took advantage of that."

An inquest last year found that the deaths of five patients, including Mrs Halfpenny, were contributed to by neglect.

The hearing was told that patients were underfed, locked in their rooms, staffing levels

Recommendations INCLUDE

■ **Care home residents and their families are assigned a responsible nurse.**

■ **Nursing home care homes should provide and facilitate the continuing professional development of their staff.**

■ **Care businesses must have robust plans to recruit and sustain trained staff, monitored by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).**

■ **CQC inspections include discussions with relatives of residents.**

■ **Concerns raised by coroner's officers about possible patterns or high numbers of deaths at services or organisations are reported to the police.**

■ **Local authority and NHS commissioners share concerns about services with existing and prospective residents and their families.**

■ **The CQC develops an app that provides up to date information about care services and enables public**

awareness.

■ **Care homes display their complaint process in prominent communal areas.**

■ **Care providers contractually required to hold open meetings with residents and their relatives on a regular basis to discuss issues of general concern.**

■ **Employers carry out stringent checks into staff qualifications and professional registration.**

■ **Service providers are required to demonstrate that they have established training, supervision and appraisal processes for their staff.**

■ **The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) commissions training about situations that prompt safeguarding concerns and criminal activities of ill-treatment or wilful neglect.**

■ **The CPS should obtain expert advice when considering neglect and safeguarding.**



ABOVE: Family of those who died at Orchid View and, left, Laura Barlow. BELOW: Neglect contributed to the deaths of five residents

JEAN HALFPENNY



The CPS also concluded that Southern Cross could not be pursued for corporate manslaughter as organisations cannot be held accountable for the criminal actions of their staff.

Ian Jerome, whose uncle Bertram died shortly after leaving Orchid View and was found to have signs of a head injury in his post mortem, said: "Orchid View was the best looking home

ENID TRODDEN



from the outside, but it was the worst.

"We are going to be pushing and pushing for changes.

"A public inquiry is the only way we will get justice.

"This is just the first rung on the ladder for justice.

"The first we heard about most of the awful things that happened to our relatives was in the inquest. We haven't had justice for that.

WILFRED GARDNER



"We hope there will be a law change and those responsible can be put before the courts."

West Sussex Adults' Safeguarding Board ordered the serious case review.

The solicitor representing the families, Laura Barlow, said: "I intend to write to the CPS to ask them if they would like to reconsider their decision.

"It doesn't seem fair that

JEAN LEATHERBARROW



these cases have slipped through the net.

"Nick Georgiou has gone as far as he can go, but there are still many issues, and criminal prosecutions are something a public inquiry could ask for.

"The recommendations in the review are comprehensive and apply to many different

DORIS FIELDING



organisations both locally and nationally, but for real change to occur they must be delivered and there are questions over who will now drive these improvements and who is ultimately accountable, not only for the neglect at Orchid View, but at other care homes across the country."

Extract from the blog of Louise Goldsmith, leader of West Sussex County Council:

It is our responsibility to ensure that the people that need us most – the vulnerable, the weak, the frail – are cared for and protected from harm at all costs. Sometimes problems are so serious and fundamental that they cannot be resolved. Closure is then the only option. This was the case with a care home in Crawley known as Orchid View. In this extremely serious case there were five deaths which the coroner last year found were directly attributed to by neglect and substandard care at the home. This home was privately run by Southern Cross Healthcare which no longer exists. In such cases we commission a Serious Case Review, conducted by an Independent Chairman, to look at what happened. In the report there are recommendations for our Adults' Safeguarding Board and for the county council. I want to assure everyone that this will be an absolute priority for the county council. There is no getting away from the facts in this Serious Case Review. No one would want this to happen anywhere. Our duty is to do all we possibly can to prevent this happening again, and that has to be our prime commitment in the coming months.



Coun Peter Catchpole

RESPONDING to the report, Peter Catchpole, West Sussex County Council's cabinet member for adult social care and health, said: "What happened at Orchid View was harrowing.

"We welcome this report and its recommendations. There is nothing more important than looking after the most vulnerable people in our society and in this

respect Southern Cross Healthcare has been judged to have failed.

"Statutory agencies such as West Sussex County Council had no choice but to take action to investigate and ultimately move people from the home to protect them.

"Nothing will help ease the pain of the families who were affected

by these terrible events and who lost loved ones. I want to offer them my condolences and assure them that we will act on the recommendations made in this report and do all we can to ensure that the other agencies involved in managing and regulating the care of our elderly relatives do the same.

"We wholeheartedly support the

recommendations made in this serious case review and want to see them acted upon so that individuals, private businesses and companies can be held to account when it comes to failings in care.

"The care provided at Orchid View was extremely poor and our own health and social care teams were faced with a difficult set of

circumstances when they began the safeguarding investigation.

"We do believe that acting on the recommendations contained in this report will go a long way towards preventing this happening again by encouraging all families and stakeholders to share information to enable emerging themes and patterns to be identified and acted upon."

Drive latest vehicles at motor show

MOTORISTS will get the chance to drive the very latest car models at the Moving Motor Show next month.

The show will be put on by the AA and takes place at Goodwood Festival of Speed, Chichester, from June 26 to 29.

There will be cookery demonstrations from top chefs and free 30-minute driving experiences on the Goodwood circuit for 12 to 17-year-olds.

Chris Jansen, the AA's chief executive, says: "Many people fondly remember the British motor show and the thrill of seeing new cars up close.

"The Moving Motor Show presented by the AA at Goodwood not only lets you get your hands on but, in many cases, drive the latest models from many of the world's top marques.

"It will be an automotive spectacular for the whole family with everything from the earliest motorcars to the latest hypercars."

Night tour of South Downs

A TOUR of the South Downs at night will be held on July 4.

Brighton and Hove City Council's ranger service has teamed up with the University of Sussex for the 9.30pm to 11.30pm event.

They will use thermal imaging equipment, telescopes and moth traps to discover and learn more about insects, badgers, foxes, bats and more.

The free event will set off from the northern end of Ladies Mile Road, Brighton.

For more details and to book call 01273 292929 or email cityparks@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

XXXX LOTTERY

THE results of the latest Martlets Hospice lottery draw, made on May 30, have been revealed.

First prize of £1,000 goes to ticket number 29384 held by someone from Hove.

Second prize of £150 goes to ticket number 53322 held by someone from Brighton.

Third prize of £100 goes to ticket number 02744 held by someone from Brighton and fourth prize of £50 goes to ticket number 28022 held by someone from Worthing.

The following ticket holders each win smaller cash prizes: 00186; 12788; 26304; 26368; 26622; 27640; 29788; 29806; 31540; 32920; 34164; 34519; 39440; 39988; 40208; 41364; 41919; 42442; 44406; 44688; 50084; 53548; 54984; 55788; 56200; 58002; 59217; 61246; 64540; 68860; 69004; 72204; 74168; 75860; 77404; 78648; 79880; 83184; 84888; 86088.

