

# Asthma + Lung UK's Westminster Support Group



<https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/>

Helpline 0300 222 5800

[helpline@asthmaandlung.org.uk](mailto:helpline@asthmaandlung.org.uk)

0737 8606728 for questions on asthma.

**Westminster Breathe Easy support group.**

Contact [t.jelen@btinternet.com](mailto:t.jelen@btinternet.com), or text: 0794 6514380

*We support people with respiratory conditions, their friends, family and carers, helping with information and companionship.*



The 4-page printed newsletter is posted to our non-digital members. But why not receive the newsletter direct to your inbox by registering with [www.breatheeasywestminster.com](http://www.breatheeasywestminster.com) to become a **free** member.

The **Westminster Breathe Easy monthly meetings** are at 11 am on the third Monday of every month, top floor, Ada Court, 16 Maida Vale, W9 1TD, (text 0794 651 4380 for updates).



As I am retiring at the end of the year, I lobbied the Council for admin help and they graciously funded Age UK Westminster. This remit is still in question and an urgent plea to our members have resulted in some marvellous people stepping up. But professional

administration is still needed and we also hope One Westminster can help with an experienced volunteer. This will be my last newsletter,

Our monthly **ZOOM** meetings continue the first Friday every month until Christmas. A member is considering hosting for us, it is really easy, it is basically to let members talk to each other!

If you would like to find out about Breathe Easy support groups **in other areas**, you can email [supportgroups@asthmaandlung.org.uk](mailto:supportgroups@asthmaandlung.org.uk) or call the Asthma and Lung UK Support & Development Officers on 0300 3030 253.

**Westminster Libraries** are starting up health hubs and we hope (at the very least) to have quarterly sessions to tell people about respiratory support subjects, about how to use inhalers, research and pollution. Our allocated hub session is October 11<sup>th</sup>, Victoria Library 2-4pm.



**Issue 56  
Sept  
2024**

**Charity  
number  
326730**

**LAST  
CHANCE**

for pressed  
flower cards



7 cards with  
envelopes  
for £10.00  
*inc postage.*

Text  
0794 6514380



Please return  
your inhalers  
and blister  
packs  
to your  
pharmacy

QR code  
for free  
membership





This RSV vaccine is an important opportunity.

Often in families, we find youngsters with snotty noses through RSV, this infection can be helpful to build their immunity to disease, however very young babies and elderly with respiratory conditions can become really ill with this (I know personally!)

So do see your GP and take up the opportunity for this vaccination.

About inhalers, did you realise that the emptying of your lungs **before** you breathe in the medication, is also **really** important. whether slow with a spacer, or faster with dry powder. (see <https://www.rightbreathe.com/> for inhaler specific information)

And do ask your GP to prescribe you a spacer if you use a pressurised (MDI) inhaler. And note that salbutamol reliever is now available with metered counter and in dry powder. For eco reasons, dry powder (DTI) is replacing pressurised inhalers (MDI ) where suitable.



Stephen Spavin, who is maybe coming in to help support admin for our group, (see his picture on the right), Christine Mead of the Westminster Council for funding and organising, Cathy Selford for keeping an eye on our struggling non-digital members, Cristy for catering and my daughter, Emily, who has helped me to keep this group



going for the last 10 years plus, Felix, who is now in intensive care for all those trips out to Isabella's Plantation and not forgetting all those lovely members who have given encouragement, help and thanks over the years!

### Carers Network **Creative Writing Telephone Group**

Is a group run by volunteer Timna, for local unpaid carers where you can produce your own writing, inspired by poems songs and short stories. There will be group discussions, as well as time for solo writing, all of which will help you discover in a fun and the different tools that writers use. They are held monthly, usually on a Thursday between 11.00 – 12.00. Contact Mark. 020 8960 3033 or [events@carers-network.org.uk](mailto:events@carers-network.org.uk)

Do see your GP for advice if you feel at risk of falls. Healthcare professionals take falls in older people very seriously because of the huge consequences they can have for health and wellbeing. *More on falls in our digital section.*



## **"Up and Coming" events with Breathe Easy Westminster.**

*Our live meetings are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, and our Zooms are on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of every month.*

- 16 Sept Ada Court, networking and sharing.
- 4 Oct Zoom, Westway transport help
- 21 Oct Ada Court, Green Doctors
- 1 Nov Zoom, Listening books
- 18 Nov Ada Court, "How To Avoid Winter Chest Infection and Management"
- 6 Dec Zoom, What pharmacies can do!
- 16 Dec Ada Court, Christmas & my retirement party.



What a lovely day we had at the Royal Mews, with our thanks again to Amy of the Royal Collection.

They also give zoom meetings on the first Wednesday of the month, from 2pm.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4407732986>

Meeting ID: 440 773 2986

Wed. 2 Oct. Royal Fashion

Wed. 6 Nov. Drawings in the Royal Collection

Wed. 4 Dec. Performance history, Windsor Castle

## **"No Internet, Only Phone?"**

[Westminster Contact Centre](#) may be able to help 020 7641 1444.

[Benefits](#) 0800 072 0042 .

[Age UK Westminster](#) 020 3004 5610 (10.00 – 14.00) offers advice and assistance.

[Abbey Community Centre](#) 020 7222 0303 has lots of local support and fun.

[Open Age](#) for venues, activities and advice 020 4516 9978.

[Penfold Hub](#) guide to support pathways 020 3815 0033.

[Westminster Citizens Advice Bureau](#) 0808 278 7834.

[Westminster Libraries at Home Service](#) 020 7641 5405.

[Rachel Blake](#) City of London and Westminster

[POhWER's Independent Health Complaints Advocates](#) making an NHS complaint 0300 456 2370

[Carers Network](#) 020 8960 3033

[Independent Age](#) 0800 319 6789.

[The Patient Association](#) 0800 345 7115



**NHS APP HELP DROP-IN**

Every Tuesday  
13:00 - 15:00  
From the end of June 2024  
Location: HAPPY HUB  
23 Third Avenue, W10 4BS

Sessions to assist people on

- Setting up the NHS App Account
- Access your NHS services
- Book GP Appointments
- Repeat Prescriptions
- View Your Records

Register with Ease

For a seamless registration process, we recommend bringing the following items:

- Your NHS Number
- Photo ID or
- Request for a ODS Code from your GP

For More Info

07883316387  
www.abuntupledge.com  
info@abuntupledge.com

UBUNTU PLEDGE North West London

Download NHS App

### Self Help

Note the help now available at Third Avenue with setting up the **NHS app on your phone**. This is a very useful app and further links can enable you to see your test results.

### Community Pharmacy services

Patients are now able to get treatment for seven common conditions without the need for a GP appointment or prescription. Pharmacies will be able to treat sinusitis, sore throat, earache, infected insect bite, the skin infection impetigo, shingles and women with uncomplicated urinary tract infections.

## Antibiotic resistance

### Did you know that antibiotics only work on bacterial infections, not viral?

What can we do to help stop antimicrobial resistance (AMR), one of the top global public health and development threats. WHO estimates that bacterial AMR was directly responsible for 1.27 million global deaths in 2019 and contributed to 4.95 million deaths. The misuse and overuse of antimicrobials in humans, animals and plants are the main drivers in the development of drug-resistant pathogens. We can help by ensuring we take the FULL course of antibiotics whenever prescribed. In a respiratory exacerbation the prescribed route now is initially a steroid alone and an antibiotic only taken when bacterial infection, usually noted by change in phlegm colour.



I recently watched an **RSM seminar on Long COVID**. Since 2020 at least 65 million individuals worldwide are estimated to have Long COVID, and more than 200 symptoms have been identified and attached to this often-debilitating illness, causing employment and economic problems. [Dr Eric Topol](#), who has authored and co-authored [numerous scientific papers](#) and research articles delving into long covid gave interesting and in-depth explanations. Points I noticed: -

- It is the *mild infections* that are most likely to cause long covid
- Any one of the current multiple infections can result in long covid
- Direction should be for preventing infections, rather than the difficulty of treating the long covid conditions which can affect any part of the body.
- Serious lack of focus by big Pharmaceuticals and Governments in *preventing* mild covid infections. (nasal sprays?)

Asthma & Lung UK has [basic information](#) on their website and details of [NHS support](#). The charity [Long Covid Kids](#) is another lifeline.

This following digital part of the newsletter is full, with a multitude of links to open up to further information. (*cntrl + click when hovering over a blue highlighted field*). There should be something to suit everyone.



Some is easy and some clinical. **Be selective**, choose to explore what appeals, search by the magnifying glass or save looking into some links for another day.

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# Asthma & Lung UK (A+LUK)



Why not call A+LUK helpline. 0300 222 5800, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm if you need advice.

## Groups and Support



Improve your ability to handle breathlessness and connect with a supportive community of individuals who can relate to and empathise with your experiences. See [LINK](#) Explore their diverse range of online, in-person, and singing groups to find the one that best suits your preferences and needs.

**ALUK SUPPORT GROUPS VIDEO ON YOU TUBE** – take a look and see all the online Support Groups available for you to join free [https://youtu.be/vm49ooUV\\_7s](https://youtu.be/vm49ooUV_7s)

## Literature

See some samples of available COPD support literature: -

- [First Steps to Living with COPD](#)
- [COPD Management Plan](#)
- [Smoking and your lungs](#)

## Bronchiectasis

Asthma & Lung UK has lots of online information on bronchiectasis [HERE](#). And you can join the online volunteer led [bronchiectasis group](#), BeHappy group run by the enthusiastic and supportive Patricia. She also has information on [drugs in development](#) and other sources of information, such as the **2024 [NTM and Bronchiectasis Conference](#), which was a huge success!** Catch Up on the World Bronchiectasis conference highlights [HERE](#).

The conference brought together nearly 500 attendees, fostering valuable connections and empowering patients. With close to 150 participants gathering in person and over 300 joining virtually, the event facilitated a dynamic exchange of knowledge and support. Lookout for details coming soon on our May 2025 conference!

[Check out the slideshow below featuring photos of this powerful event!](#) the slides are amazing and airway clearance for any respiratory condition.

### From THE LANCET:- **Rethinking Bronchiectasis as an Inflammatory Disease**

Bronchiectasis is understood to be the result of a complex interaction between infection, impaired mucociliary clearance, inflammation, and lung damage. Current therapeutic approaches to bronchiectasis are heavily focused on management of infection along with enhancing mucus clearance. Long-term antibiotics have had limited success in clinical trials, suggesting a need to re-evaluate the concept of bronchiectasis as an infective disorder. A new generation of novel anti-inflammatory treatments are under development and repurposing of anti-inflammatory agents from other diseases could revolutionise patient care.

**Mental Health** Support links [HERE](#)

## Travel

**ALUK** travel advice for people with lung conditions – take a look before you set off on your travels [Travelling Safely with a Lung Condition](#)

## Breathe Easy International

ALUK has suspended the International Meetings. It was a useful meeting for people who cannot make respiratory meetings in the daytime. With the death of Derek, who ran the group from Wales, ALUK took over, but the uptake sadly dwindled and we miss the friends from overseas. We had such fun and to hear about experiences from international members. Let's hope it can get going again.

## Breathe Easy Westminster

*Our Westminster Breathe Easy is an Asthma & Lung UK Support Group, we are one of over 200 groups nationally that are patient led and patient run.*

## Falls

Healthcare professionals take falls in older people very seriously because of the huge consequences they can have for the health and wellbeing of this group.

As a result, there's a great deal of help and support available for older people, and it's worth asking a GP about the various options. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls/> and they may carry out some simple tests to check your balance, and review any medicines you're taking in case their side effects increase your risk of falling.

We had an excellent talk by the Falls Team, [clcht.triboroughfallsservice@nhs.net](mailto:clcht.triboroughfallsservice@nhs.net) and you can self refer to their support service. See [HERE](#) what to do if you fall.

**Free testing for coronavirus** (COVID-19) from the NHS has ended for most people in England. There are a small number of people who will still be able to get free COVID-19 tests from the NHS. Please read the following guidance for information:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/get-tested-for-coronavirus/>

have a health condition which means you're eligible for [COVID-19 treatment](#)

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overview-and-advice>

## Travelling



London Councils provide Freedom passes for elderly or disabled. See [HERE](#),

If caught without, you can use your contactless bank card if it has the right symbol. Always use the same device or contactless card to touch in and out

- this will make sure you pay the right fare.

)))

## Vaccinations



From 1 September 2024, those who turn 75 and those age 75 to 79 will be eligible for a free vaccine to protect them from respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). This is an infectious disease of the airways and lungs. RSV infection often causes symptoms similar to a cold, including:

- cough
- sore throat
- sneezing
- a runny or blocked nose

It is a good start, but we wonder about protection for those helping with youngsters, who are over 80 or immune suppressed. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/rsv-invites>

Read more [HERE](#) about this and other vaccinations.

The tobacco industry has a lot to answer for, and the impact on the generation of those affected by smoking is now coming to the fore and respiratory services struggle to cope. See this recording: "From knowledge to action: **Addressing tobacco cessation in chronic respiratory diseases**"

[HERE](#) with Passcode: na4VuP?A



In addition, please find attached resources from the session and links provided below:

- [Tobacco cessation and chronic respiratory diseases | Knowledge Action Portal on NCDs \(knowledge-action-portal.com\)](#)

## What you can do about Air Pollution...

**Ambient one** has received a red dot design award! It is a **portable air quality tracker**



designed for creators, by creators. It tracks 4+ pollutants in real time helping you to keep your air clean, boosting your health and wellbeing. If air pollution levels rise around you, ambient one quickly spots the issue and encourages you to take action - no more guessing or worrying about air pollution. Check out the Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign [HERE](#).

And see our video on **indoor pollution** [HERE](#), password: t355Ja1r

## CREATING Communities OF OLDER ADULTS

[PATINA PEOPLE](#) is a growing community of older adults, offering a wide range of accessible, inclusive and interest led activities, courses, social events and celebrations exclusively for those aged 55+.



**Reducing the Steroid Burden:** Medication Review for Patients with Asthma on Biologic Therapy'. This webinar is now available to **view on demand** and share with colleagues.



## Disabilities and Impairments

*(with our sincere thanks to our member Fran for the below information)*



**Read the latest Impact Report from Imperial College Health Partners (ICHP), the health innovation network for North West London.**

2023/24 was a pivotal year for ICHP, supporting the North West London Integrated Care System (ICS) to mobilise a Mission-led approach to research and innovation. Their new **report**, showcases the outcomes and impact of their work across the first year of working in this bold and ambitious new way, enabled by ongoing collaboration with their partners in the NW London system and beyond.

To ensure full accessibility to its hospitals and clinics, **Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust has just allocated special telephone numbers to be reserved to those who cannot use the telephone** [deaf, hearing loss, speech impediment, Parkinson, tremors, hand MSK, neurodivergence etc...] **but who rely on [BT Relay UK](#) to read and type their messages.**

Please make note of these numbers:

**Outpatient appointments/admissions : 020 3311 1598**

[i.outpatientappointments@nhs.net](mailto:i.outpatientappointments@nhs.net); [i.admissions@nhs.net](mailto:i.admissions@nhs.net)

**Main Switchboard: 020 3311 1599**

[i.switchboard@nhs.net](mailto:i.switchboard@nhs.net)

**Patient advice and liaison service (PALS): 020 3311 1596**

[imperial.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.PALS@nhs.net)

*But "please do not use these numbers if you are not disabled or impaired since our staff members will be expecting a UK Relay member of staff to join the call and misuse will be preventing those in need from accessing services."*

## Care Conundrum

Interestingly I found that my own Power of Attorney for £ and health, maybe out of date, as taken up before 2007. And I noted that there are no help with care home costs if one's *total* estate value was more than £23,250. A reminder also, that even if you think you have nothing of value, a basic WILL is always advised. We have yet to see what changes the new government brings in! Do explore the excellent [Independent Age](#) web site for [more information about care and support](#).

## Exercise



Kapil is a specialised trainer who runs [Open Age's Healthy Lungs](#) exercise program in Westminster and RBKC and who aims to improve chronic respiratory health, helping to manage COPD, Asthma and other respiratory conditions. Contact [ktyagi@openage.org.uk](mailto:ktyagi@openage.org.uk) or you can call: 020 4516

## Rambling



Now the weather is improving, is the time to take the opportunity to improve our activity levels. It is proved again and again that exercise improves our lung condition. Simon Lloyd, a highly experienced, kind, and supportive leader, conducts small groups for gentle rambles. The Tuesday health walk for the Breathe Easy group happens every week at 11.55, beginning at St James's Park.

Contact: [simontlloyd65@gmail.com](mailto:simontlloyd65@gmail.com) 07949 316279.

## Breathing

**myCOPD** is the **complete app for patients living with COPD**.

Perfect your inhaler technique with our easy-to-follow inhaler videos and learn how to manage your COPD from world experts. Complete online pulmonary rehabilitation classes from the comfort of your home and get the very best in COPD care.

## NHS, Patient Involvement, Research

**HERE** is a massively important report on **an independent investigation of the NHS**



by [Lord Darzi](#) to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. It is an amazingly important document and a follow up from his previous recommendations some years ago. With an analysis of the state of the NHS.

### A single place for your health information

Add, access and share your health information with healthcare professionals, family and carers - anytime, anywhere. [See HERE](#)

And read a [professional's view](#) on the HCP's attitude to patient records being open for them

The BMJ article on giving patients real time access to their full electronic health records can help them to manage their health as effectively as possible [HERE](#).

**NHS "Continuing Healthcare"** (or NHS CHC) is free healthcare provided by the NHS to individuals who have [significant and ongoing healthcare](#) needs. This package of care can be received in **any** setting outside of hospital including care homes, hospices or even within your own home. It is incorrect to state that a person can only be eligible for continuing healthcare funding if they are in a nursing home. Their health needs, not their location, is the key factor.





**World Health Organization**

[HERE](#) is WHO's fact sheet on COPD.

[Symprove](#). Not meant as a sales pitch for an expensive but excellent probiotic, which helps balance stomach bacteria, but a great article [HERE](#) on "What your poo tells you"



### **Pollution and its impact on respiratory health**

[This article](#) explores the impact of the environment on the health of people with asthma and COPD. The author Ren Lawlor, PCRS Vice Chair and Education Lead, focuses on two key areas, indoor (home) and outdoor pollutants and severe weather extremes such as heat waves or very cold weather

### **Primary Care Respiratory Update (PCRU)**

Our [members' magazine](#) packed with useful features, clinical updates, educational updates, respiratory news and opinion.

See [HERE](#) for their "**Greener Respiratory Care Calendar**"



If you would like to share your views on research and help others understand its impact, sign up to become a reviewer!

Our reviewers include health and care professionals, people with lived experience, carers and other members of the public. We value our reviewers' thoughts on how research impacts them, and they help us decide whether to develop a summary of a piece of research. [Learn more about reviewers](#)

A recent NIHR webinar explored [how to reduce antibiotic use in primary care](#). Research showed that:

- clinics with low prescribing rates do not experience more infection complications
- antibiotics make little difference for children with chest infections

decision support tools can reduce prescriptions

### [Chronic Respiratory Disease Information for patients | IPCRG](#)

The International Primary Care Respiratory Group (IPCRG) is a clinically-led charitable organisation. Their scope is research and education to improve prevention, diagnosis and care of respiratory diseases in global community and primary care settings.

### **Inhaler videos: new translations available**

They offer a [complete set of inhaler and peak flow videos in a range of languages](#)

## European respiratory information (ERS + ELF)

on World Bronchiectasis Day, The Global Allergies and Airways Patient Platform ([GAAPP](#)) organized an insightful webinar titled 'Engaging Patients in Global Bronchiectasis Research.' The event involved Ninon Farber, a patient ambassador, giving valuable insight into his journey with bronchiectasis. Read more about bronchiectasis on the GAAPP website [here](#). <https://mailchi.mp/ersnet.org/ers-newsletter-18-july?e=139069a54b>



[CME Online - ERS Respiratory Channel \(ersnet.org\)](#)

The European Lung Foundation (ELF) offers grants to



**European Patient Ambassadors Program**, EPAP, is a free, online, self-learning programme that introduces patients and carers to some of the basic skills and knowledge needed to represent yourself and others successfully. See introduction [HERE](#).

## Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals

Research, news and events from the Royal Brompton and Harefield. See [HERE](#).



**The International Primary Care respiratory group** has produced a **desk top helper**. A practical guide in breathlessness in adults for primary care for clinicians. See [HERE](#).

Also they involved in the planning of a new important World Health Organisation (WHO) webinar on tobacco cessation for people with chronic respiratory diseases on 11 July. [HERE](#) is the WHO original publication on tobacco's impact on asthma and COPD.

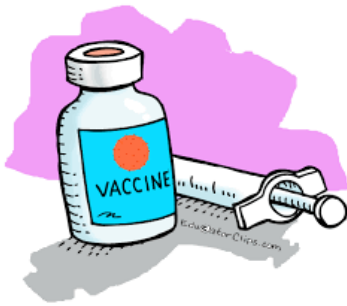
See their marvellous resources for patients, including videos and breathing techniques [HERE](#)



**LONG COVID – 4 years on.** I hope you can now watch the amazing recording of the event (see below) only available until the end of October 2024, the link is [HERE](#). Passcode: RSM@CES16

The NHS take on the long covid affects and long covid is [HERE](#), but no information on some ideas for the future, whilst mild covid continues to produce affected patients.

The success of the **COVID-19 vaccination programme** has meant that the **requirement for shielding and identifying people as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) is no longer necessary.**



However, there remains a **smaller number of people whose weakened immune system means they may be at higher risk** of serious illness from COVID-19, despite vaccination. Enhanced protection measures. This guidance [HERE](#) is for those individuals who remain at higher risk.



Developing better understanding of hygiene is key to developing effective hygiene behaviour. Dr Sally Bloomfield, International Scientific Forum on Home Hygiene. recording available [HERE](#) (needs winding to the start!)

Also information about improving infectious disease prevention in schools [HERE](#). and includes classes on hygiene in homes and public settings.

## Local support information

### Westway CT.



If you're over 50 and using mainstream transport is challenging, but you want to stay connected to the things that matter to you, Westway can help with a range of accessible community transport for people who struggle due to mobility issues or other difficulties.

They provide a Shopper Bus service, and an affordable Volunteer Cars service to help you get out and about. To use these services you need to be a Westway CT member, joining is easy and costs just £12 a year. [purvitablatt@westwayct.org.uk](mailto:purvitablatt@westwayct.org.uk) Phone 020 8964 1114 . They will give us a zoom talk on the 4<sup>th</sup> October.

### Independent Age

Has free telephone information groups for over 65s, discussing the topics that matter in later life and connecting people to new organisations, ideas and opportunities. See [HERE](#)



If you are over 65 and would like to join one of these sessions or you'd like to refer someone to us please email us on [telephone.services@independentage.org](mailto:telephone.services@independentage.org).

When someone dies, it can be overwhelming. There is a lot that needs to be done at a time when you may feel ill-equipped to deal with it. It's important to remember that support is available

And you can read their Updated bereavement advice [HERE](#).

## Information on adapting your home

If you don't want to move, you may want to consider making some adaptations to your home so you can continue to live there independently. Sometimes a small adaptation can make a big difference. You see some support [HERE](#) to work out what you need and may be able to get help with costs.

**Urgent care centres** provide medical treatment for non-life-threatening injuries and illnesses that require immediate attention but are not considered emergencies.

These centres are open at least 12 hours a day and can be booked through NHS 111. Did you know you have local walk in centred in Soho and at St Charles. See more [HERE](#).



[In-Deep Community](#) Task Force is a grassroots charity working with isolated older people and children with Special Education Needs (SEND) and their families in Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth and surrounding areas. They aim to promote friendship and understanding in the community, and tackle loneliness and isolation by bringing people together to take part in meaningful activities.



The amazing **Carers Network** is still around to offer support to carers and to help unpaid carers. See the self-referral form [HERE](#) for help and advice. They have agreed to give a talk to us next year. The Carer's Network list a multitude of support contacts and help for understanding your rights as a carer. See sample link [HERE](#)



Summer is gone and we must look towards it getting colder. **Shine** is an excellent organisation that can help with advice. See [HERE](#). For self-referrals, call 0800 953 1221 to speak to an advisor.

Find Royal Mail parcel [Lockers and Collect points](#) can be quite useful



<https://www.openage.org.uk/centre-and-online-activities>

And see their Autumn ACL programme [HERE](#),

Fires involving e-bikes & e-scooters lithium batteries are on the rise across London. Ensure exit routes from your home are kept clear & all electronic equipment is bought from a reputable source & is inspected regularly. For all the latest safety advice, please refer to the London Fire Brigade website: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/>.



**£1 tickets for admission to The King's Galleries** are available to anyone in receipt of most benefits. Apply through <https://www.rct.uk/one-pound-tickets>.



For those who are non-digital, tickets can be booked through 0303 123 7321



Tune in to our latest podcast 'Aids, Adaptations and Adjustments' and hear tips and advice on planning ahead, making adjustments, and useful gadgets that can make life easier, with Leah, Terry and Marc.

Have any ideas for topics you would like to hear about, or want to share your story? You can submit your suggestions by

email: [podcast@arthritisaction.org.uk](mailto:podcast@arthritisaction.org.uk)

## Westminster Council Information and services



See [HERE](#) library services

See [HERE](#) Westminster Environmental news



See [HERE](#) "Making Westminster Safer"

See [HERE](#) Westminster recycling news



Did you know about the [Onion Garden](#), Westminster's hidden green oasis.

## Worried about your Gambling?

Gambling affects all aspects of community, causing relationship breakdown and hardship, GamCare they aim to alleviate these issues with treatment, signposting, focus groups and peer support.



They also operate the [National Helpline](#), for anyone in Greater London who is harmed by gambling. Contact: **Judith Daniels**, London Coordinator, M: 07947 922358.

If you are put off **claiming Pension Credit** because of the long forms, you can call 0800 99 1234 and DWP will help you fill it in. *(Info from Penny Woods on LinkedIn, who was BLF's CEO)*



LISTENING BOOKS

If you live in the UK and find that your illness, mental health, physical disability or learning disability makes it more challenging to read or hold a book, Listening Books is for you! They are giving a talk to us on our Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November zoom. You can stream

books, magazines etc. [LIBBY](#) is also another option using your library card to register.



[Healthcare Central London](#) (HCL) is a Federation of 32 General Practices in Westminster caring for more than 275,000 registered patients. [They provide](#) Community and Primary Care services to local residents and a wide range of staffing, management and administrative support to our member Practices. They work closely with Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and other key partners, including the Local Authority and community organisations.

[Health Share](#) Is an independent healthcare provider, with established roots in muscular-skeletal health and diagnostics, founded by expert NHS clinicians. See [MSK](#) for self-referral.



The magnificent [Age UK Westminster](#) goes from strength to strength with their services, which go from help with [digital inclusion](#) to a [visual impairment advocacy service](#), amongst much else.

**The Penfold Hub** for Westminster residents over 50, is near Church Street, they have great activity programmes. Contact [denis.kane@housing21.org.uk](mailto:denis.kane@housing21.org.uk) for more information.

**Penfold Community Hub**

All sessions are open to Westminster residents over 50 years old and carers.

ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

### [ABBAY CENTRE ACTIVITIES](#)



They offer a wide range of free and low-cost classes and [community activities](#) to promote healthy and cohesive communities in south Westminster, central London. The variety of courses reflects the diversity of the population in our local area, and we try to run activities to suit everyone.

Their spacious cafe sits in the heart of London, near [Westminster Abbey](#) and the Houses of Parliament. Whether you are in town for work or on holiday, it's the perfect place for breakfast, lunch or coffee break.

[View menu and opening hours](#) >

Do explore [People First](#), they support independent living and health in K&C and Westminster, including about our Breathe Easy



**Groundwork Free Home Energy Saving Support.** See [HERE](#)

*\*Also they will be giving us a talk at Ada Court on our October 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.*



# Our Planet & Random Things

**Eco Business** is another way to keep up with world news, like [THIS](#) article about Malaysia's strong political will being instrumental in ensuring the success of 'polluters pay' mechanisms, including solutions such as deposit return schemes and mixed waste sorting.



Researchers and environmental advocates have long raised concerns about advanced recycling, warning it can create even more toxic and planet-heating pollution than virgin plastic production and is even more energy intensive than traditional plastic recycling. Studies show the facilities are most likely to harm communities that are already vulnerable to contamination and climate threats.

## Plastic



Complaints of insufficient stock may seem a surprising when hundreds of millions of tons of plastic are produced each year. But despite what is suggested in marketing materials, post-consumer items such as food packaging and empty soap bottles cannot easily be recycled via pyrolysis. The process works best with clean, homogeneous inputs, but sorting and cleaning plastic is expensive. As a result, most chemical recycling facilities working at scale rely mostly on processed industrial scrap – or “plastic left on the cutting room floor during production”.

The **Wellcome Collection** is a free museum and library exploring health and human experience, it is worth investigating, see [HERE](#).



**Positive News** is a great place to find articles about tolerance in the face of hate, helping kids spot fake news and understanding depression, amongst much more. The inspiring current affairs magazine has stories of social and environmental progress, quality, independent reporting with a focus on solutions, boosts your wellbeing and helps you engage in the world. See more [HERE](#)



These are boom times for billionaires. While most of us have muddled through various economic crises lately, the world's richest have seen their wealth soar. Brazil wants to do something about that in the form of a global billionaire tax. Will other countries sign up?

[Brazil's global billionaire tax \(mailchi.mp\)](#)

## Food giants are strangling Britain's farmers and consumers.

The problem is our monopolised food system. Think of it as a vast profit machine shaped like an hourglass, with many food producers at the top, millions of consumers at the bottom, and a few dominant firms – such as giant supermarkets or global food traders – clustered at its narrowing neck, siphoning a cut from the passing traffic.

This power ripples through global supply chains. Between [70% and 90%](#) of commercial grain trading, for example, is now controlled by five giants, known as ABCCD: ADM, Bunge, Cofco, Cargill and Louis Dreyfus Company. Together, they handle the bread, cereals, meat and other food that lands on our plates. Bunge now wants to [merge](#) with a rival firm, Viterra, to create a single company, giving farmers even less choice as to who they can sell their produce to, and giving the combined firm more power to pay farmers less.



George Monbiot's "[Thriving on Catastrophe](#)" 21st June 2023

A staple of dystopian science fictions is an inner sanctum of privilege and an outer world: chemical desert/airless waste/District 12 – peopled by the desperate poor.

The insiders, living off the exploited labour of the outlands, are indifferent to the horrors beyond their walls.



What those dystopian stories reflect is the core-periphery model of colonialism. The core extracts wealth from the periphery, often with horrendous cruelty, while the insiders turn their eyes from the human and environmental costs. The periphery becomes a sacrifice zone. As environmental breakdown accelerates, the planet itself is treated as periphery. Those in the core shrink to their air-conditioned offices

[ZOE Science & Nutrition \(chtbl.com\)](#)



Plant protein and strength: all you need to know

Did you know you can build muscle just as effectively with plant protein as with animal protein?

## Hot, hot and hotter!

[What is a heat dome](#)? Heatwaves caused by trapped hot air are becoming more common. Across the world, heatwaves are happening more often, lasting for longer and the temperatures are becoming more dangerous with each year, especially for vulnerable people.

**“The UK government’s climate action plan is unlawful”** the high court has ruled, as there is not enough evidence that there are sufficient policies in place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The energy secretary will now be expected to draw up a revised plan. This must ensure that the UK achieves its legally binding carbon budgets and its pledge to cut emissions by more than two-thirds by 2030, both of which the government is off track to meet.

The environmental charities [Friends of the Earth](#) and [ClientEarth](#) (one of the best environmental charities in the UK) took joint legal action with the Good Law Project against the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Yes, most of us realise that **water** is going to be rationed in the future.

The sewage in our rivers and the drought in Spain are just a samples of the problems we face.



Some of the biggest financial hikes this year could be from your water company, meaning your water bills may rise by an eye-watering 70% over the next five years. Your diet, perhaps surprisingly, is one of the biggest drains on water. Eating foods that need large amounts of water to produce – particularly meat from animals that have been fed on grain – massively increases your hidden water footprint.



Air pollution [doesn't just damage health](#). – Food has enormous cultural importance and longstanding traditions, meaning changing diets in rich nations away from meat and dairy and towards plants is challenging. The fightback from vested interests in industry is still ongoing!

We know we can't [beat the climate crisis](#) without cutting meat consumption, we know cattle production is a big factor in [destroying biodiversity](#), and we know many already [eat more red meat](#) than is healthy for them. We also know the meat industry [is heavily subsidised](#).

Lastly, I must mention my friend, Alana, who runs Geomantica, which is dedicated to Earth harmony, geomancy, dowsing, esoteric farming and gardening, and eco-sensitive living, since 1998. See what she is doing, way ahead of her time! [www.geomantica.com](http://www.geomantica.com).

*"So long and thanks for all the fish"*

*my best wishes to all*

*Tess Jelen,*

*September 2024*

