



THE PUDDENECKS

HELP FOR OLDER PEOPLE

APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER

CHARITY No 1039897

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Secretary: Roger Moore MBE

A very warm welcome to all members and volunteers to this edition of the April Newsletter. With Easter now been and gone and all those lovely, calorie filled, Easter eggs distributed and eaten, Spring is in full swing with flowers and blossom everywhere around, as the pictures below from Wisley which we took today when visiting. What a pleasant change to see blue skies and warm air from the grey, cold and very wet days of January and February.



RHS Wisley in Spring mode

Despite the gloom of the first two months of the year, the Puddenecks team has brought much laughter and happiness to numerous 'Guests' at our Bingo and Spanish themed evenings in January and February and then in March we entertained 'Guests' with a St Patricks day meal and entertainment with Irish flags and hats everywhere in the room and Mick and Mick playing all the old Irish favourite songs. Great atmosphere, lots of positive reaction from 'Guests' on how enjoyable this latter evening was.



Irish evening



Spanish evening

At the February meeting we welcomed Nick Jones, a reporter for the Barnet Society and he wrote us a lovely article in the Barnet Society's webpage containing lots of photos and a detailed description of how we operate and I have included this below.

For almost 60 years Barnet's Puddenecks Club has been hosting events including a meal and entertainment for the town's elderly residents

20 Feb 2026

Written by **Nick Jones**



Entertaining groups of Barnet's senior citizens to a monthly supper evening is one of the many activities organised by one of the town's oldest charities, the Puddenecks Club.

The Puddenecks are volunteers whose mission is to hold events which help elderly residents overcome the loneliness of being home alone. Guest evenings in the winter months are followed by barbeques in the summer and there is a chance to keep fit at a weekly exercise class.

Like so many other community groups the club is keen to recruit additional volunteers and helpers and especially car drivers who can assist with transporting elderly guests and with fundraising.



Committee member Victor Valoti – seen above with guest Lesley Keating – said the club realised that the popularity of a monthly evening meal demonstrated of the importance of not forgetting the elderly.

Volunteers collect each of those attending an event directly from their homes and then drive them back again at the end of the evening. "So many of the elderly, especially widows and those living alone don't like going out on their own in the evening and our aim is to take the edge off that loneliness," said club secretary Roger Moore.

Club members and volunteers are maintaining a contribution to the community which started in 1958 when a group of Sunday lunchtime drinkers got together in the now demolished Swan and Two Necks public house in High Road, Whetstone.

They decided to meet once a month for a steak and kidney pudding and then hold a meeting to decide how best to help older people in Barnet – hence their name, Puddenecks.

“We pride ourselves on making sure that any elderly resident we invite out is picked up at their home and then returned safely,” said Mr Moore (right) seen above signing up a new volunteer driver Larry Williams at the club’s February night out which was an evening meal with a Spanish theme at the Old Fold Manor Golf Club.

“It is quite an exercise collecting 75 or so senior citizens from their homes and then getting them back again but we know how much our efforts are appreciated.

“Many of those we collect from their homes are widows or other elderly ladies living on their own and they are just so fearful of going out on dark winter evenings, so we feel what we do is a real contribution to the community.

“We follow our monthly evenings out in the winter months with a couple of summer barbecues at Totteridge Millhillians Cricket Club.”

Another of the precautions taken by the club to ensure the safety of their elderly guests is to invite along two volunteers from the Barnet division of the St John Ambulance Brigade.

“We realise that at one of our events we might need some medical support one day and we are so grateful for the support of their brigade’s volunteers.”



For the guests the great attraction of a meal out with the Puddenecks is the chance to chat with friends said Jenny Windsor (above, second from left) with Tony Cardosi, Angela Casali, Sandra Gallardo and Terry Gleeson.

“It is so important for us all to get out of the house and have a real chinwag with our friends. What the Puddenecks do for Barnet’s elderly cannot be praised enough,” said Jenny. Mr Moore arrived at the club’s February evening after collecting Gillian Collison from her home. She could not wait to join her friends. He said the club was launching an appeal for new members – and especially car drivers – because they felt there was low public awareness within Barnet for what the Puddenecks did.

Anyone who is interested in joining is asked to make contact by emailing roger.moore@puddenecksclub.org.uk or visit their website for more details www.puddenecksclub.org.uk

Each year the club raises upwards of around £20,000 to finance its activities.

A golf day at the Old Fold Golf Club in September followed by a dinner and auction is one the main fund-raising events. There is also an annual charity dinner with a guest speaker, and these are backed up with donations and raffles, including an annual Christmas raffle at Ye Olde Monken Holt public house in Barnet High Street.

Mr Moore said the value of the club's support for the elderly was underlined during the covid emergency when the Puddenecks delivered 100 portions of fish and chips to 100 residents twice a month.

"For those who can't get to our guest evenings we continue to deliver 20 or so portions of fish and chips every two or three months. We also have an exercise class for an hour every week in the Wesley Hall – and that attracts 40 or so people who are instructed by a professional tutor. Probably the most eagerly anticipated event is the Puddenecks' Christmas dinner where volunteers at the Totteridge Millhillians Cricket Club cook two meals, for a sitting at 12 noon and then another at 5pm".

As a result of this article, we have met with Teresa Cole-Robson, and Jane and Martin Bennetts and, hopefully over the coming months they will agree and become full members of the club. We also received a £50 donation from a Mr K Murphy, as a thank you for our work. Through the good works of Ben Hillson, we are putting a similar, but smaller article into The Hadley Resident's Association newsletter, as well as starting up dialogues with Love Barnet/High Living and Rev Francesco Aresco, Rector of St Mary The Virgin, Monken Hadley. The emphasis for these latter publications will be the new coffee morning and exercise class we are proposing to start soon and where help is needed (see below). Does anyone have any other thoughts on other local publications where we could raise awareness of what ***THE PUDDENECKS*** do and help needed.

At the start of 2026 three existing Puddenecks members decided to end their involvement with the Club, Stan Blackwell, and Sean O'Connor (members for 31, and 13 years respectively) and a more recent joiner, Marie Chapman (7 years). We thank them for all their contributions. Good news though is that we have gained a member, Nigel Coan, who has been a keen volunteer for some time and now decided he wants to be a full member and, as mentioned above, we are hopeful some more people will join shortly.

I mentioned above we are starting two new events for 'Guests'. Our Tuesday exercise class goes from strength to strength, and it currently has almost 45 'Guests' attending and around 60 'Guests' on our list so we are now proposing to run a second class on a **Tuesday**. To accommodate this our original class will now start a little earlier at 11.am (previously 11.30am) and the new class will commence at 12.15pm lasting for one hour. Please try and get the message about this second class out to 'Guests' as we would like to ensure we can get a full house for this class as well.



Exercising at Wesley Hall

Our second new event is morning coffee and natter at Wesley Hall. This will be held on the last **Wednesday of April, (29th); May, (27th); and June, (24th)** starting 11.00am for a couple of hours. This event is being organised by Larry Williams one of our newer members, who will be bringing some of his staff from 'GoodOaks' who provide a *Quality care at home service*. While Larry will be promoting his care company facilities there is no obligation or recommendation from **THE PUDDENECKS** that 'Guests' need to subscribe but this might be something they might like to think about, as we are all getting older and jobs around the house/flat and running a home get more difficult and time consuming.

This latter event promises to be a good opportunity for our 'Guests' to meet new and old friends in a warm friendly venue and we will be serving coffee and biscuits as well as providing a variety of different activities to keep you active as well as providing advice on many matters. Also, it will be one of the few opportunities for members/Volunteers to meet. If these coffee mornings are successful, we will look to making this event an ongoing commitment. Can you help by attending on any of the dates above, as an observer, and giving the committee some feedback to see if this is something **THE PUDDENECKS** should expand?

Once again, we ask all drivers to ensure they wear their **PUDDENECK'S** lanyards when picking up 'Guests' and to please use common sense when help is needed getting 'Guests' in and out of the cars and doing up/undoing safety belts. Compromising situations can quickly occur and this could lead to embarrassing situations. If you need a lanyard, contact **Bernard or Vic** before agreeing to drive. If you can add Bernard's or Vic's mobile telephone number to the lanyard this will ensure that in the event of an accident, emergency services can contact someone from the Club. We would again like to reassure members and volunteers that, having consulted our insurance brokers last summer, we now have very adequate insurance cover for any possible eventuality. If any person wants to have even more comfort on insurance matters, then please contact **Neil Todd**.

If you can help deliver some fish & chips to an elderly person's house, please let **Bernard** know and he will add you to the list of possible deliverers. Having a significant number of volunteers on his list will help him to manage this activity more effectively and we know from 'Guest' replies that it is

very much appreciated. While this is an irregular event when Bernard does organise a delivery, is very much appreciated by the recipients.

On the **13th April** we held The Puddenecks 68th AGM at Old Fold and had 14 members present while 14 members apologised. Not sure what happened to the remaining 12 members whose emails obviously don't work. Roger, Rab, and Bryan highlighted the Trustees, Treasurers' and Chairman's reports which had been circulated, and answered questions arising mainly on insurance costs, and if we can try again to return to organising club meeting(s). In his summary the Chairman thanked all the committee for their dedication to ensure that we function, smoothly and continue our well established and successful relationship with 'the Elderly of Barnet'. In particular he described that Neil Todd should be delegated 'head of partnerships' given the number of relationships Neil has stuck up with many other local organisations. The reports and accounts were all approved and accepted by the membership. If you have not seen any of them, and they give a well-versed account of the Club's activities, please ask and I will forward a copy to you. Election for the committee was held, and the following members were elected.

President Neil Todd; Chairman Bryan Harrison; Treasurer Rab Butler; Secretary Roger Moore; Welfare Co-ordinator Vic Valoti; Golf day organiser Greg Kraushar; Assistant Secretary Mark Fricker; Committee members Mike Bishop; Neil Hill; Keith Yearley; Steve Nicholas.

In any other business the Chairman emphasised the need to get younger people more involved in helping organise maybe one/two extra 'Guest' events and onto the committee and this was seconded by Bernard Woolf who believes that if we want The Hadley Trust to consider us again, we have to show that we can run addition and maybe different events than our normal 'Guest' evenings.

He also reminded members that we have been without a Vice-Chairman and Fund-Raising Co-ordinator for some years, and these two positions really should be filled. So, if you feel you would like to be more involved and would like to join the committee and help shape the future of the club, then do not hesitate to contact Bryan or myself who will expand on ways you can help.

Future events. Guests' nights are now booked for **Wednesday 15th April, Wednesday 20th May, and Wednesday 17th June**. All will be held at Old Fold Manor Golf Club, and I am certain Bernard and Vic will turn these into theme evenings as these seem to be so enjoyed by 'Guests'. All we need is help on the night. If you can volunteer to drive and bring 1 to 3 'Guests' along and take them home that would be great as many of our 'Guests' are scared to come out at night, so to have someone collect them from their door, see them to their seat at Old Fold and then return them back to their own front door is so comforting for them and rewarding for us. However, if driving is difficult, you can still attend on the night to help ensure the 'Guests' are looked after during the course of the evening. This is not an erroneous task as the Golf

Club staff are brilliant with the Guests and we do have St John Ambulance present in case of any emergencies.

Our relationship with the Barnet, St John Ambulance volunteers remains excellent, and we are always grateful that they can be available for our events. While their members give their time freely, the Club do get charged by St John Ambulance for the facility of hiring them and this cost us £140 per event, but the committee believes this is a good investment and essential planning.

In July we are running our annual BBQs on **Tuesday 21st July and Wednesday 22nd July** at Totteridge Cricket Club with the events starting from just after noon to 3.00pm. Once again, all the food will be prepared by cricket club members, and they will provide the entertainment for the event. The Puddenecks job is to get 50 'Guests' there and back on the two days. Given they are weekdays we do need your support to ensure the success of these two events, as they have been good now for many years.

On **Friday 26th June** we have been asked by Belmont Mill Hill Prep School, The Ridgeway, London NW7 4ED to bring around 20 'Guests' to their school's summer concert in the main hall. The concert will start at 11.00am so we need to have 'Guests' arriving by 10.45am and after the music and singing the school will entertain us with some refreshments served by the year eight pupils. Departure time will be around 1.00pm. If you have never attended one of these events, I would highly recommend it, as the standard of music is very high and the school is blessed with a wonderful music teacher who seems to work wonders getting the best from her pupils and the refreshments are good as well!!

While we do have an option of using a taxi company for all the above events, the committee believe the important role of delivering and returning 'Guests' to their homes should be carried out by a Puddeneck or volunteer member.

So please volunteer to drive

We do need also need helpers on the night at Old Fold Manor so, if you cannot drive, you can still be part of the team and help make sure all our 'Guests' are fully looked after.

So please do come along to help

We had a lovely email from Ed Skilbeck, one of our volunteer drivers who has moved to Deal on the Kent coast and therefore can no longer help who replied to, my best wishes for the future, email, *'It's been a total pleasure to have done the very small amount of work and help I've performed for **THE PUDDENECKS**, and all power to Roger, Vic and the team with your continued dedication to the Barnet elderly community'*. Who can we get to preplace Ed as a driver could it be YOU??

A **change of date.** Due to unforeseen circumstances, we have had to change the date of our **Golf Charity day.**



It will now be held on **Tuesday 22nd September at Old Fold Manor Golf Club.** Please adjust your diaries for this changed date as this event is the most important fund-raising the Puddenecks run, and it needs your help to ensure another success.

Another future date for the diaries is **Friday 13th November 7.00pm** when we will be running our fund-raising Charity dinner at Old Fold Manor Golf Club, but more details of this event in the next newsletter.

As you can see there are lots of events for you to be involved in so please make sure they are in your diaries.

Lots of dates for you, please ensure diaries are up to date

As mentioned before, we now have a range of **Puddenecks polo shirts** which are available at £20 each. The committee recommends wearing the Sweaters/Polo Shirts when meeting 'Guests' as it clearly identifies you. If there is a demand for 'V' neck jumpers, the Club will be happy to source these. All these clothing items are in the hands of **Mark and Cassie Buttle** (buttlemark@btinternet.com or cassiebuttle@yahoo.co.uk) so please feel free to contact either of them if you want to be **'PUDDENECKS'** visible. Cassie says that they have yet to make a sale of any apparel so please help them by buying sweater/Polo shirt that makes you easily visible to 'Guests'

A**lmoner.** I have not been advised of any members unwell, but if you know of any of our members who are not well, please let me know.

V*acancies within the club.* It was very encouraging at Race Night when Mark Fricker approached me and offered to help with some secretarial roles and he has very kindly taken on the role of minute secretary, so thank you Mark. We still need someone to volunteer take on this simple role of **Almoner** keeping the Club informed of any members not well so, if you could do this then please let me know and I can organise how this role can be fulfilled.

Also on the subject that sharing roles is good for a club's prosperity would anyone like to take on the role of Editorship of the newsletter, something I have been responsible for, for the past 15 years. Maybe just for a few months and as I only comes out quarterly that does not seem onerous?

2*00 Club.* Would you like to join **THE PUDDENECKS** '200 Club' and maybe become one of our successful winners? It only costs £12 a year. Please contact Rab Butler for more details. The latest winners were: -

Jan: No 32, Jenny Bishop. £20	No 140, Brabara Bradfield. £20	No 63, Derek Roberts. £50
Feb: No 69, L Bayman. £20	No 48, E Murray. £20	No 31, Mike Bishop. £50
Mar: No 157, Alan Bradman. £20	No 150, Bernard Woolf. £20	No 68, Robin Loader. £50

B*irthdays.* When we had monthly meetings, it was the Secretary's job to announce, birthdays, and length of memberships and we now continue this in the newsletter.

Birthdays in Jan/Feb/March. Peter Bennison; Ann Bunyard; Alan Dennis; Mark Fricker; Paul Kidd; Derek Roberts; Seema Shah and Bernard Woolf.

I hope you had happy and enjoyable birthdays.

L*ength of Service as of Jan/Feb/March:* Seema Shah 3 years; Richard Bridges 4 years; Greg Kraushar 5 years; Peter Smith and Mark Fricker 8 years; Terry Barnes 9 years; Paul Kidd and Will Harrington 12 years; Rab Butler and Bryan Harrison 13 years; David Brewer 14 years; Neil Todd 16 years; Richard Davison 17 years; Alan Dennis 19 years; Robin Loader 23 years; Mike Bishop 33 years; Andy Heath 37 years and Barry Cooper 41 years.

Congratulations to you all for the work you put into making the Club so successful.

Forthcoming events: -

Wednesday 15th April; 'Guest' evening with entertainment at Old Fold Manor Golf Club 6.30pm till 9.00pm.

Wednesday 29th April; Trial coffee morning; Wesley Hall, 11.00am to 1.00pm.

Wednesday 20th May; 'Guest' evening with entertainment at Old Fold Manor Golf Club, 6.30pm till 9.00pm.

Wednesday 27th May; Trial coffee morning; Wesley Hall, 11.00am to 1.00pm.

Wednesday 17th June 'Guest' evening with entertainment at Old Fold Manor Golf Club, 6.30pm till 9.00pm.

Wednesday 24th June; Trial coffee morning; Wesley Hall, 11.00am to 1.00pm.

Friday 26th June; Concert at Belmont School for 'Guests', 10.30am to 1.00pm

Tuesday 21st July; BBQ for 'Guests' at Totteridge Cricket Club, noon to 3.00pm

Wednesday 22nd July; BBQ for 'Guests' at Totteridge Cricket Club, noon to 3.00pm

Tuesday 22nd September; **CHANGED DATE.** Golf Day at Old Fold Manor Golf Club.

Friday 13th November. Fund raising dinner for members and friends. Old Fold Manor Golf Club, 7.00pm to 11.00pm