



May 2020 - Special Edition

LUTON IRISH FORUM

Providing social opportunities and welfare advice

Advice and practical help is working well

To protect the health of everyone, including people who need our service and our staff, as well as all their families, our welfare service is not providing a face-to-face service at this time.

However, we are still here for those who need help. Our staff are working from home in line with Government guidelines and we're giving our usual high-quality advice by telephone, post and email. Providing our service in this way means we are still able to support clients with benefit checks, applying for benefit, completing forms, advocating with local authorities, submitting Mandatory Reconsideration and appeals.

Face-to-face benefit assessments are still suspended and people who are waiting for their benefit to be reviewed will continue to receive payments in the meantime. Benefit appeals are moving forward and each case is being reviewed to see if there is sufficient evidence for a Judge to decide the appeal without a hearing or whether a telephone appeal can be arranged, and we are representing clients at these telephone hearings.



Marion, Trustee, is staying in touch with dozens of members every week by phone and online.

In March & April

- 117 new welfare cases were opened
- 178 individuals being advised
- 188 welfare cases worked on

In the last week of March & April

- 51 enquiries for shopping & befriending
- 32 shopping/collecting prescription trips completed for people who are self-isolating

Each week

- 70 befriending telephone calls are made plus contact made online
- Up to 18 members getting together at a time via video link
- Tea & Chat, Baby & Toddler, Literary Society and Art groups now meeting by Zoom

Our video groups (except the Baby & Toddlers) are open to new people. Please get in touch to join a group, get advice on benefits or to arrange someone to phone you for a friendly chat on a regular basis.



Volunteer Treasurer and new Trustee Luke delivering shopping to a self-isolating member.

Have fun staying in with our puzzles

We've made this wordsearch a bit different by giving clues to the word you need to search for. Letters can be used more than once. See how many you can get from the clues but if you get stuck, the words you need to find are listed at the bottom of page 4.

Thanks to Discovery Education's puzzlemaker for this wordsearch, we made the Irish-themed clues. See more great puzzles online at <http://puzzlemaker.discovery.education.com>

The colours of the Irish flag (3 separate words).

Both an emblem of Celtic identity and a religious symbol.

A Patron Saint of Ireland whose feast day celebrates the coming of spring.

Sometimes called a 'squeezebox'.

County where Irish mythological hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill built a pathway to Scotland.

A colour of lemonade.

A 'fair city, where the girls are so pretty'.

Now brewed in almost 50 countries, this Irish drink is rich in iron and antioxidant compounds.

A Patron Saint said to have banished all the snakes out of Ireland.

A jewel, and popular name for the Isle of Ireland.

The number of Provinces in Ireland.

A symbol of Ireland (seamróg or seamair óg in Gaelic).

People we're not meeting during lockdown.

Often referred to as the "Cultural Heart of Ireland" and a European City of Culture for 2020.

A quick and lively folk dance.

A shrine close to where a religious vision was reportedly witnessed by 15 people in 1879.

Birth country of St Patrick.

'Health' or 'Cheers' in Gaelic.

A musical emblem of Ireland.

A traditional dance with 4/4 tempo.

Currency of Ireland.

City that was 'birthplace' of RMS Titanic.

Perhaps your first musical instrument? A tin

W	G	Y	S	E	G	E	O	B	Y	S	D	W	H	D
D	U	U	T	D	L	O	R	B	S	H	L	G	A	D
S	U	I	I	T	N	I	L	O	N	A	A	A	R	E
D	H	B	S	N	G	E	R	D	W	M	R	L	P	R
W	T	I	L	I	N	C	I	P	G	R	E	W	U	Q
O	H	N	D	I	C	R	A	R	B	O	M	A	U	I
W	X	Z	F	I	N	T	S	L	F	C	E	Y	A	C
K	L	O	T	O	R	U	E	S	E	K	Z	K	N	I
I	U	L	R	I	T	S	A	F	L	E	B	H	E	R
R	E	H	C	M	I	R	T	N	A	U	R	I	E	W
C	C	K	N	A	K	W	A	L	E	S	J	D	R	G
N	V	D	H	A	C	C	O	R	D	I	O	N	G	L
S	L	A	I	N	T	E	O	L	J	O	A	I	P	P
E	N	M	X	N	X	K	H	N	F	P	J	Z	Q	A
V	U	E	X	V	B	V	R	O	K	Y	B	O	Q	T

Quick tea-time quiz

1. What has a mouth, but cannot eat. Moves, but has no legs. Has a bank, but no money?
2. A woman is born in 1800 and celebrates her 50th birthday in 1750. How can this be?
3. A man looking at a photo of someone says: "Brothers & sisters, I have none. But that man's father is my father's son." Who is in the photo?
4. Which timepiece has the most moving parts?
5. Imagine that you are in a boat, in the middle of the sea. Suddenly, you are surrounded by hungry sharks, just waiting to feed on you. How can you put an end to this?
6. When young, I am sweet in the sun. When middle-aged, I make you happy. When old, I am valued more than ever. What am I?
7. I give away half my money, then I spend half of what I have left, then I lose five pounds and have five pounds left. How much did I start with?
8. What way of sorting would mean numbers one to 10 are listed in this order? 8 5 4 9 1 7 6 10 3 2

Answers at the bottom of page 4. More at <https://thoughtcatalog.com/> & icebreakerideas.com/ & www.mentalfloss.com - get in touch if you're not online.

Membership extended to 2021

At the May Board meeting held via video link, our Trustees agreed to extend current memberships for an additional year. This means that everyone who joined for 2019-20 and people joining now will all have the benefits of LIF membership until 31 August 2021 at no extra cost to them.

Chair of Trustees Tom Scanlon explains: "The wellbeing of our loyal members is a priority for the Luton Irish Forum Board of Trustees.

"We are aware everyone is hoping we can all get back to our clubs and enjoy socialising again but there continues to be a lot of uncertainty as to when normality can return."



With prices elsewhere seeming to be on the rise, we reckon the rollover of our membership must be the best bargain around!

Standard Membership at only £5 gives you

- ✦ Access to Clubs, Events and Activities
- ✦ Discounted Coach Trips
- ✦ Discounted entry to Members only Christmas Party
- ✦ Members Newsletter
- ✦ Eligible to claim Bingo Snowball & the 59 Club prize
- ✦ Invitation to Annual General Meeting.

Extra Membership is only £10. For this you get you all the above plus discounts or special rates at companies providing services locally. Up to 31 August 2020 these are Active Luton, Considine Motors, Goodfellow Garden Services, Marston Heating, Mr Rad Domestic Installer, Neville Funeral Services, Old Skool Pantry, Orbital Trampoline Park, Pestgon, Pictons Solicitors, Pines Hotel & Bar, Robby's Tea Shop, Slimming World, The Tree Expert & Travelodge.

In light of Extra Members not being able to benefit from these during lockdown we will be negotiating extensions or other discounts, to run from September this year to August 2021. Details will be announced in this newsletter and online.

Join online at <http://lutonirishforum.org/about-us/join-lif/> or contact us to become a LIF Member.

New to Zoom or WhatsApp?

We are creating guides to help new users with using a mobile phone, Zoom and WhatsApp. Copies of the draft guides are being posted with this newsletter and are online - we would welcome your thoughts on these guides.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Help with accessing benefits for claimants who are 'shielding'

The DWP and the Post Office are working together to help claimants in England who were told to shield due to the Covid-19/ Coronavirus pandemic and have a Post Office card account but are having problems accessing their payments.

If you are in the shielding group, you should have received a call from the National Shielding Service to check that you can access your benefit payments and to offer help where needed.

Any DWP vulnerable claimants who has concerns about access to their benefits, whether or not you've been told to shield, should contact the DWP helpline on 0800 731 0469, or the Post Office helpline on 0345 722 3344 if you have a Post Office card account as there are a range of 'existing processes' that may help.

A listening ear from the professionals

A listening ear is being offered by Icap (Immigrant Counselling And Psychotherapy) for anyone of Irish heritage living in the UK who would like to talk about how they are doing in these difficult times.

Icap says the world has changed a lot and quickly so it's normal that anyone may be feeling worried or concerned. It might be worry about your health or that of family or friends, maybe arranging a funeral without the usual social support there would be, or you're finding isolation is lonely.

Also, current events can bring up memories that are tricky to talk about but bother us and we may not want to burden family or friends.



Contact Icap on 020 7272 7906 to talk to someone confidentially, Icap will ask for your name and phone number only.

Take comfort in prayer

Many members have said they are missing mass and being able to pop into their church to say a prayer at this time.

Srs Kathleen and Antoinette from the Sisters Of St Clare wanted us to let everyone know that they are very happy to speak and pray with anyone on the phone in these anxious times.

The Sisters can be contacted on 01582 424518.



Answers to wordsearch and brainteasers on page 2.

*£40. 8: Alphabetical order.
It has thousands of grains of sand. 5: Stop imagining! 6: Wine. 7:
1: A river. 2: She was born in 1800 B.C. 3: His son. 4: An hourglass.
SHAMROCK, SLAINTE, WALES, WHISTLE, WHITE.
GREEN, GUINNESS, HARP, JIG, KNOCK, PATRICK, RED, REEL,
DUBLIN, EMERALD, EURO, FOUR, FRIENDS, GALWAY, GOLD,
ACCORDION, ANTRIM, BELFAST, BRIGID, CELTIC CROSS,*

Diary

Tuesdays 7:00-8:00pm
Irish Language chat by Zoom

Tuesdays 11:00am & Fridays 12:00pm
Art Groups by Zoom

Thursdays 10:00-11:00am
Tea & Chat by Zoom – 28th May includes
Dementia Awareness session

Fridays 10:00-11:00am
Baby & Toddlers meet by video link
(group members only)

Tuesday 9th June 4:00-5:00pm
Trustees Meeting by video link

For how to join our groups by video link,
or to dial in if you're not online, please
contact us.

Public Covid-19 briefing

A special online meeting of LBC's Health and Well Being Board is planned for early June. It will be a public forum which anyone may attend and will look at specific concerns raised by local people around issues of health and wellbeing related to the virus and how these can be addressed.

When details of how to join the meeting are announced soon, we'll publish on Facebook and our social media platforms.

Share your memories

Irish In Britain (IIB) has created an online space where people can come together and remember those within the community who have passed away. Now when we can't be together in person to mourn our loss or pay tribute to those lives lived, anyone can share a memory, stories and a photo of the individual who has passed away. Access a simple form to post your memories via <https://bit.ly/IIBSharememory>.

If you need help or aren't online, contact Judith at IIB on 07726 700807 / comms@irishinbritain.org or get in touch with us at LIF.