

I am excited this week to be writing my column about the next Pensioners Information and Advice Fair I am hosting. Last year, I had an idea that I wanted to bring together all of the services and support agencies for older people together in one place – a kind of Freshers Fair for older people. I held Fairs across my constituency last year and I was completely overwhelmed with their success, being attended by over 50 stalls holders and hundreds of older people! It was a no brainer to hold them again this year.

For a long time now I have campaigned on lots of issues surrounding the improved welfare of older people. It is fairly universally accepted now that prevention is better than a cure and so the best way to support ourselves in our older years, and the older people in our families and in our communities is to ensure that the appropriate support structures are in place to allow for healthy ageing and a continued active role in the community. This may be mental or physical stimulation through recreational clubs such as gardening or active retirement associations to tackle loneliness and keep fit - last year we even had a stall advertising line dancing classes. Or it may be home adaptations or legal advice; this event will also be attended by the local authorities including KCC, TMBC, Citizens Advice Bureau and Trading Standards. Maybe someone could benefit from health or care support. Or maybe you might know an older person interested in joining the local wardens or speaking to someone from Kent Police or Kent Fire and Rescue about safety. We have everything older people may need or benefit from in their retirement and I would encourage everyone to come and have a look!

So once again I am inviting all pensioners, their families, friends and carers to come along on 10 May between 10am – 2pm at the TA Centre on London Road in Ditton. It is free event which aims to share information and advice about the services, support and activities available across the local area so spread the word and come along and say hello.