

AgeingMatters

in Ireland

Wishing you and yours a Happy Christmas

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AgeAction

For all older people

1992

Celebrating 25 years

2017

Opinion

Happy Christmas from our new CEO



John Church

I am delighted to be able to address our members as the new CEO of Age Action Ireland.

Having spent the last twelve years in the charity sector as the CEO with Arthritis Ireland, I am very happy to be in the privileged position to be able to continue to work with older people in this country.

Of course, in the case of people living with a chronic disease such as rheumatoid arthritis, my main focus was advocating for better health services, developing self-management services so people can cope with the many challenges they face and building world-class research facilities in our medical schools.

Challenges

The challenges that we face here in Age Action go beyond health and include other important elements of ageing well such as financial, emotional, physical and living in a place that feels like home.

Having spent only about eight weeks in the organisation I can see immediately that we have some great services that are making a big difference to the lives of older people. The opportunity is there now to scale up some of these so that we can reach out to more people.

For example, our Care & Repair service is one of the best kept secrets in the country, and this year alone we will carry out about 34,000 essential service calls. This is typical of the small things we do that make a huge difference to older people.

Digital isolation

One issue we hear again and again is the impact of social isolation for older people and with the rapid growth in technology, society is in danger of creating the phenomena of 'digital isolation'.

Our Getting Started service is a fantastic programme helping older people stay connected with family, friends and the changing business world. Just imagine what we could do with more funding – a common challenge for many charities trying to grow their services.

Our members and friends continue to support us in this way and we are grateful for their generosity.

As we all head into the festive season, please be aware of family, friends and neighbours that may be in need of some company at this time. And if you're looking for that last minute gift, do drop into one of our stores as you'll be sure to find a bargain and help a good cause too.

I welcome any suggestions and comments you may have as I begin to lead the team into a new year and prepare us to do even more to help the growing population we love to serve.

Happy Christmas and a healthy and peaceful new year

– John Church

AgeAction

For all older people



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Almost 10,000 older patients waiting more than 24 hours

Almost 10,000 people aged over 75 were forced to wait in an emergency department for more than 24 hours this year despite a clear Government commitment to eliminate this problem.

In its service plan for 2017 the HSE set a target to discharge or admit anyone presenting to one of their emergency departments within 24 hours if they were over the age of 75.

The scandalous treatment of older patients was first revealed by TheJournal.ie and is based on responses to parliamentary questions from Fianna Fáil health spokesperson Deputy Billy Kelleher.

There is also a huge difference between individual hospitals in how fast they are processing patients.

Three hospitals, University Limerick, the Mater in Dublin and Galway University Hospital each had more than a thousand people beyond the age of 75 waiting over the 24 hour target.

On the other hand, in Sligo and Kilkenny hospitals, a bare handful of older people were affected.

Taoiseach's promise

"No one, regardless of age, should be waiting 24 hours in



▲ Age Action campaigns for the right to health as part of the Health Reform Alliance. Photo: Orla Murray Ark Photography

an emergency department," said Age Action's Justin Moran.

"But older people really should not be abandoned in hospital corridors and waiting rooms like this. Back in 2015, when he was Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar promised there would be 'zero tolerance' if anyone is kept in an emergency department for more than 24 hours.

"We welcomed that promise but we said words needed to be followed up by actions and instead older patients have been thoroughly let down."

The figures were also criticised by the Irish Medical and Nurses

Organisation.

"Our members are telling us that corridors, doorways and even fire safety exits are blocked with trolleys," said Director of Industrial Relations Tony Fitzpatrick. "People are literally head-to-toe in corridors.

"Ambulance staff regularly run out of trolleys and then there can be a queue of ambulances waiting for trolleys before they can remove a patient.

"Every week 150-170 beds are closed due to staffing shortages; there's not enough staff and the recruitment and retention of nursing staff is a huge issue."



▲ Age Action members like the Cork Glór Group were prominent in lobbying politicians ahead of the budget.

Budget delivers homecare funding but pension increase delayed again

October's budget saw a very substantial increase in funding for homecare supports, more investment in income supports for older people and an increase in the State Pension but there was disappointment that the pension increase was again delayed.

The additional €37 million for home care packages and transitional care beds was announced on Budget Day by Minister for Health Simon Harris TD. With homecare provision in crisis this additional funding is welcome.

"It won't get rid of the growing waiting lists for homecare supports," said Head of Advocacy and Communications Justin Moran, "but it will make a real difference in the lives of many families who are waiting for care."

There was also some good news for older people with small changes in secondary income supports.

Telephone Allowance

"We certainly welcome the extra week for the Fuel Allowance and the new Telephone Support Allowance, which will kick in next June, will be an additional €2.50 a week for the least well off pensioners," Mr Moran continued.

The Government also provided

an additional €10 million to support the Travel Pass Scheme and reduced prescription charges for people under the age of 70 – older people over 70 received the reduction last year.

However, while there was a general welcome for the €5 increase in the State Pension, older people were frustrated that it will be delayed.

"An increase in the State Pension was the top priority for our members in Budget 2018," Mr Moran explained.

"The extra money is welcome but many of our members are frustrated that it will – again – be delayed until March of 2018 when many need the money to help pay



Fight continues on 2012 pension cuts

Despite signatures from more than 5,000 people around Ireland there was no move by the Government in the October budget to reverse the 2012 cuts but an admission by Minister Paschal Donohoe that the pension system is “bonkers” gave the campaign a big boost.

In the aftermath of the minister’s comment on RTÉ Radio 1’s Sean O’Rourke Show the media’s focus again turned to the fate of tens of thousands of pensioners who lost out because of the 2012 changes with Age Action spokespersons prominent on television and radio.

Dáil motion

Pressure rose until Fianna Fáil’s Deputy Willie O’Dea successfully put a motion to the Dáil in late October calling for the changes to be reversed.

Though the motion does not have legal power to compel the Government to follow



▲ Age Action’s message is loud and clear!

through Minister for Social Protection Regina Doherty TD later pledged to bring forward proposals to address the issue.

As *Ageing Matters* goes to print there are some indications the Government is mov-

ing more slowly than hoped and Age Action, the National Women’s Council of Ireland and the Irish Countrywomen’s Association are planning their next steps.

Expect the fight to continue in January.

their winter heating bills.

“The State Pension is still far short of what it should be under the Government’s National Pensions Framework and we need to remember that not every pensioner gets the full five euro.

“This is the second year in a row the increase has been delayed and we’d be worried that

the tradition of these pension increases kicking in at the start of January is being undermined.”

Changes welcome

Overall though, it was acknowledged that while the delayed increase and the failure to tackle the 2012 cuts were disappointing, the changes announced by

the Government were welcome.

“Obviously, we’d liked to have seen more, especially on the pension and the Fuel Allowance,” acknowledged Mr Moran, “but the additional money for home-care and the increases in income supports are going to help Ireland’s pensioners cope with the rising cost of living.”

Homecare consultation to be published shortly

The Department of Health told a meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health last month that the results of their public consultation on a statutory homecare scheme will be published early next year.

The committee heard that the department is looking at a number of ways of paying for the scheme but that it could take up to two to three years for the scheme to actually start working.

An Age Action delegation met with the committee immediately after the department officials and highlighted the urgent need to move ahead with the scheme as quickly as possible.

The numbers waiting for home help are increasing. At the end of December 2016, there were 2,039 people assessed as needing home help but waiting for a service. By the end of April 2017, the number waiting had increased by more than 20 per cent to 2,456.

“The reality is that home help hours and home care packages are simply not available in many parts of the country,” Age Action’s Justin Moran told



▲ Carer Shirley Thornton calling for more funding for homecare at a protest in Dublin. Photo: Maxwells

the committee.

Pressure on carers

“This means more older people forced unnecessarily into nursing homes, more families struggling to cope without home helps and more pressure piled on family carers.

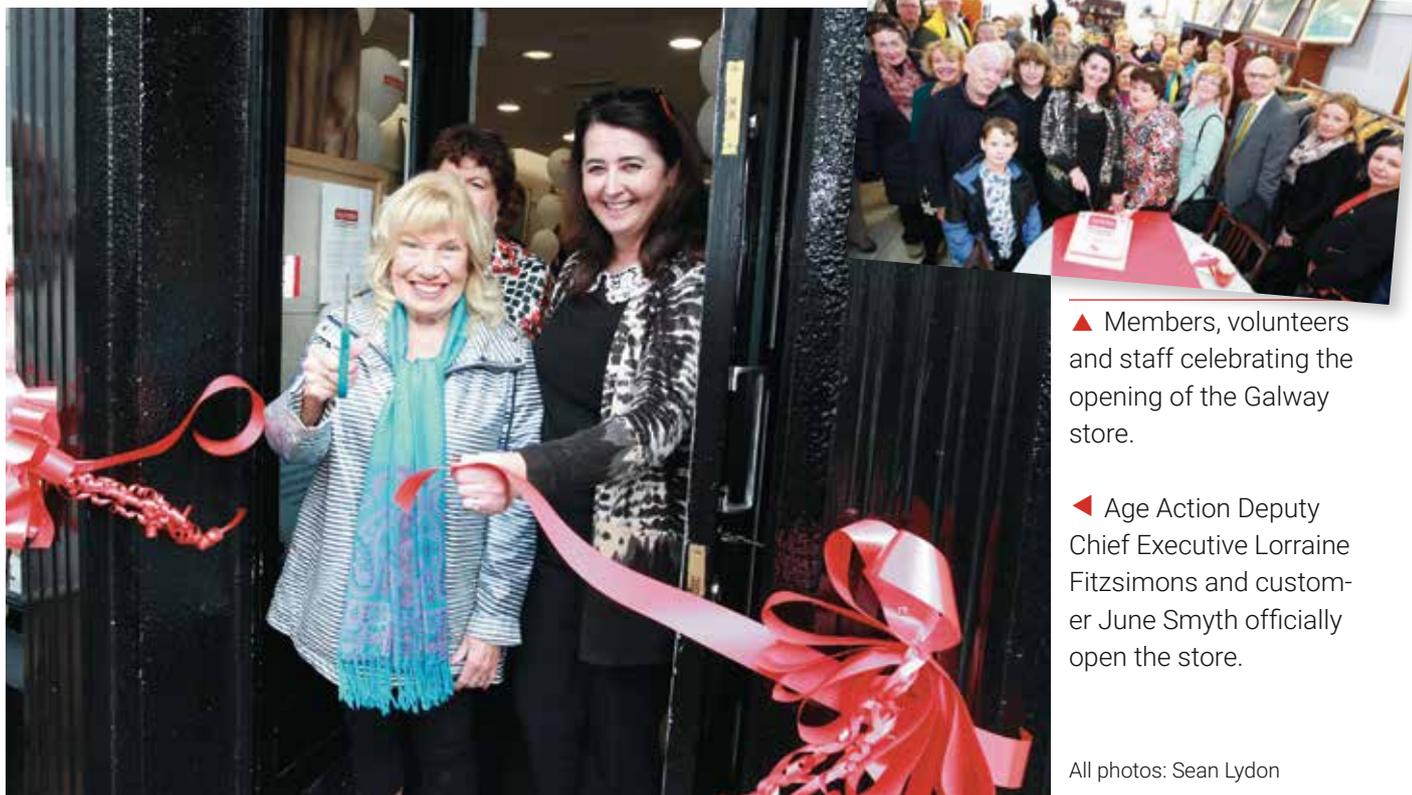
“We welcome the additional homecare funding announced by the Government in last month’s budget and we look forward to this making a real difference in reducing the number of people waiting for services but it is not a long-term solution.”

Age Action believes we need a flexible and person centred

approach to the provision of homecare services to meet the specific needs of the individual, their carer and the wider health system.

“We must change how we think about long-term care,” Mr Moran continued. “Long-term care should be recognised as a public good, not as an individual responsibility.

“We absolutely need to have a conversation about how we fund homecare but before we get to that we need to decide what kind of homecare will be provided to figure out how we can best support older people to stay at home as long as possible.”



▲ Members, volunteers and staff celebrating the opening of the Galway store.

◀ Age Action Deputy Chief Executive Lorraine Fitzsimons and customer June Smyth officially open the store.

All photos: Sean Lydon

Official opening of Galway store

Age Action's sixth charity store has officially opened at 3 St Francis Street in the heart of Galway City.

Bargain-hunters would be well advised to drop in soon to check out the store's fantastic selection of clothes, bags, jewellery and vintage accessories.

"I am delighted that we have opened this new

store to raise funds to expand our work with older people in Galway," Deputy CEO Lorraine Fitzsimons told a large crowd of well-wishers.

"We are particularly glad that the store is linked with our new office as a base for Age Action West and we hope this will become a centre for older people in Galway."

New Age Action CEO John Church with some of our first shoppers.





▲ Launching this year’s Silver Surfer Awards were Michelle Toner of open eir, John Church of Age Action, broadcaster and campaigner Brendan Courtney and former winner Betty Smith. Photo: Marc O’Sullivan

Help us find Ireland’s **Silver Surfers**

Open eir and Age Action have teamed up again to host the 2018 open eir Silver Surfer Awards.

The awards recognise the online achievements of older people using technology as well as the volunteers who teach these skills to thousands of older people across Ireland.

Recent CSO figures show that almost half of Irish people aged over 60 have never used the internet, a disturbing statistic in an

increasingly online society. Open eir and Age Action are working to change this and to open up the online world for older people in Ireland.

The overall aim of the open eir Silver Surfer Awards is to raise awareness among older people of the benefits of getting online and to encourage those who

are not online to give it a try by celebrating those older people already showing the way.

Positive impact

These awards also highlight the positive impact being online makes to everyday life – whether that’s learning new skills, running a business, staying in touch with family and friends or getting to grips with social media.

Michelle Toner, Head of CSR

with open eir, is delighted to be partnering again with Age Action.

“Having witnessed, first-hand, the amazing and inspiring things that last year’s entrants were doing online in their everyday lives, we are even more excited for the 2018 Awards,” she said.

“Our mission is to get communities across Ireland connected and to maximise the benefits of high-speed broadband. The awards recognise and celebrate the amazing activities Silver Surfers are doing online, demonstrating the positive difference it can make.

“It’s great to see so many older people getting online. I would encourage everyone who is eligible to apply for the awards to do so.”

Benefits

Age Action’s new CEO, John Church, highlighted the benefits for older people of getting online.

“The open eir Silver Surfer Awards are all about driving home the benefit of being online to older people with the aim of getting more people to give it a go and we’re delighted to have open eir on board again,” he explained.

“The awards are also a platform to celebrate older people embracing the digital world and reminds us that learning is a life-long process. Age should never be a barrier.

“It is hard to believe but almost one in five adults have never used the internet – that is more than 550,000 people in Ireland and older people are the least likely to be online!”

Nominate your silver surfer

The six categories for the 2018 open eir Silver Surfer Awards are:

- **The Getting Started IT Award** – An older person who is new to technology and has overcome challenges to become an IT user.
- **Hobbies on the Net Award** – An older person who uses the internet to pursue their passion or hobby, or who uses IT for communication and social networking.
- **Golden IT Award** – An individual over the age of 80 who uses technology to enhance his or her life.
- **Community Champion IT Award** – An older person who uses the internet to benefit their community locally or nationally
- **The IT Enthusiast Award** – The ‘Give it a Go’ older person who embraces the internet or technology with a sense of fun and adventure.
- **IT Tutor(s) of the Year Award** – An individual or group who provide voluntary support to older learners.

You can make a nomination at www.ageaction.ie/silversurfers. The closing date for entries is Wednesday 21 February 2018 and the awards ceremony takes place in eir’s Head Office in Dublin on Tuesday 17 April 2018.



▲ Last year’s winners of the Silver Surfers Awards 2017 with Carolann Lennon of open eir and presenters Baz Ashmawy and his mum Nancy.

Photo: Marc O’Sullivan

Coke, Red Bull and triathlons – meet our new CEO

It's now a couple of months since John Church became only Age Action's third CEO in the organisation's 25 year history. We sat down with him to find out a little more about the man now leading the country's main ageing organisation.



▲ New Age Action CEO John Church.

1. Can you start off by telling us a little about your background before you joined Age Action?

Well before joining Age Action Ireland I spent over 16 years in the private sector during very different times than we see now.

I enjoyed my early career start with the Bank of Ireland Group before getting my real break with the Coca Cola Company, cutting my teeth in the tough commercial world of food and drink retailing.

My move to become Commercial Director with the Red Bull distributor was a creative and fun time and it's also where I started to get real experience of managing a lot of people.

Bringing all this commercial experience to Arthritis Ireland in 2005 helped us to make a real impact on real people's lives over a 12 year period and I have to say that gave me more satisfaction than anything before it.

2. Do you think your time with Arthritis Ireland helps you understand the issues affecting older people and the wider charity sector?

Absolutely, without it I don't think I would be able to fully appreciate the trials and tribulations, as well as the joys that are often ignored, of growing older.

Of course, I had the pleasure

of helping families and young children with arthritis to live better lives as well, but the largest proportion of our audience was older people.

The charity sector is facing very different challenges now than when I joined in 2005, with new regulations, governance codes and data protection laws challenging all of us.

I'm really encouraged to see that Age Action has taken the lead in many of these and taken the responsibility to ensure we are transparent and accountable.

3. You've been here almost two months now, what have been your first impressions?

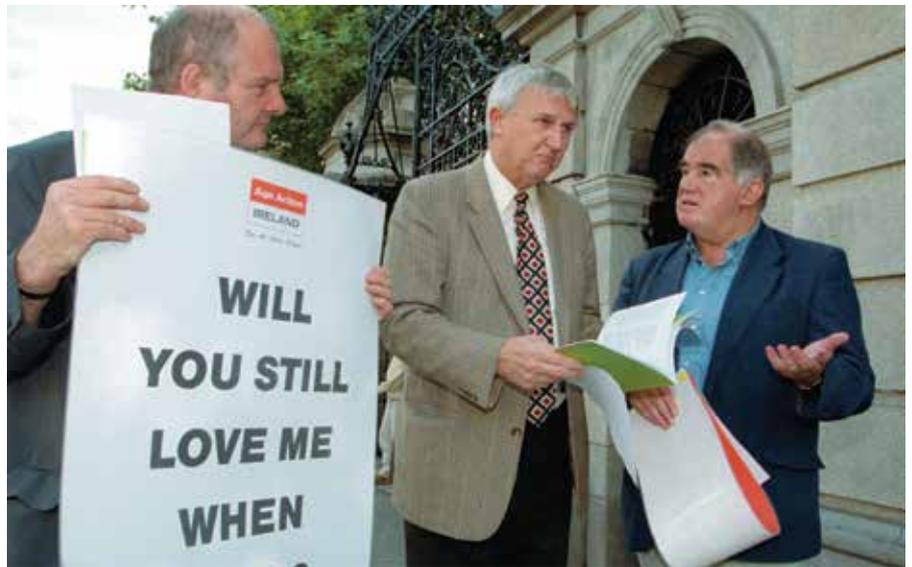
I think my first impression has been the hard working nature and commitment of the staff to the cause, which is an important starting point.

In our Care & Repair and Getting Started programmes we have some absolute gems of services that are helping countless older people every day.

I was well aware of the excellent reputation we had for our advocacy work but I'm now also beginning to appreciate the strong supportive community we have in our volunteers such as the Glór groups, our knitters and the U3A network, which is a real asset to the organisation.

4. What do you see as your priorities for Age Action over the next couple of years?

Well, one of our key priorities is no different to the hundreds of other charities out there, and that's raising unrestricted in-



▲ John succeeds Eamon Timmins (top) and our founding CEO, Robin Webster (above right), seen here lobbying politicians outside Leinster House.

come to expand our services.

We have made some good inroads in our fundraising activities and grown our number of stores over the last year. I think there are also real opportunities to engage more with corporate partners and show them the fantastic work we're doing.

With an ageing population, however, we must continue to ensure we are still relevant and over the coming months we will be preparing ourselves to ensure we do this.

5. And finally, what do you like to do when you're not running Age Action?

I've always been a keen sports fan and used to play rugby to a competitive level but these days I just watch in awe!

I've recently taken up Triathlon and find it's fantastic for all round fitness so I've signed up for the Half-Ironman next year in Dublin.

But to be honest it's spending time with my five sons that's certainly the most enjoyable and rewarding time of all.

Dear Age Action,

I have just heard on the radio that there are important changes to the Personal Alarm scheme and I was wondering what these are and would I be eligible for the grant?

Noel from Clare

Changes to the Senior Alert Scheme

A number of changes were introduced from the start of November, **Gerry Scully** explains, which will only apply to people approved for the scheme after that date. These are designed to encourage more people to join the scheme which is currently heavily undersubscribed.

The first important change is around the eligibility criteria. You still need to be over 65 but you no longer need to be living alone or only with another older person.

The main requirement is that, regardless of who you live with, you would be by yourself for long stretches of time.

Although the scheme is only open to people on low incomes there is no means test and you are simply required to identify yourself as being of limited means.

Monitoring included

The second important change is that the first year's monitoring is now included in the grant. After that it is estimated the cost of monitoring on a landline will be €65 per year and this will be index linked to ensure the price is controlled.

While the scheme works best with landline telephones digital systems can also be accommodated depending on signal strength.

It is recommended that people with digital systems use GSM mobile devices. All new GSM devices will have a roaming sim card in the unit.

You will have to pay for this sim card as well as the cost of topping it up at a cost of around €50 in the first year. This cost will increase in the second



▲ The information team is always ready to assist older people and their families.

year to €115 to include the cost of monitoring.

Pre-existing contracts and monitoring arrangements are not affected by these changes. You can now choose your own monitoring company, but you will not necessarily enjoy the fixed rate of €65.

For more information on the scheme you can ring our Information Service on 01 475 6989 or email us at helpline@ageaction.ie

Five points for perfect posting this Christmas



An Post's **Anna McHugh** has some top tips to help you get this year's Christmas greetings to your friends and family.

- 1. Early does it:** The number of parcels in and out of Ireland and across the globe is rising steadily every day as shoppers chase high street and online bargains. Anyone planning to send presents by post should get organised early to avoid last minute panic or weather-related delays.
- 2. Make it personal:** A personal message in a Christmas card or letter is the very heart of Christmas; there's pleasure in both sending and receiving. Colourful Christmas stamp booklets are now on sale at all post offices and An Post handles between 3 and 7 million mail items every day during the Christmas lead-up!

3. Give yourself time: Be sure to factor in the time for any online purchases to be delivered. With so many Irish people now living abroad, we know there'll be parcels of all shapes and sizes carrying special Christmas wishes this year.

4. Don't miss out: AddressPal.ie is the handy new service from An Post which gives shoppers their own British or American address so that you can order from websites that don't deliver to Ireland, or charge steep shipping fees for doing so, and your shopping will be delivered right to your local post office, your home or wherever suits you.

5. Pack it properly: Make sure to wrap and seal cards and parcels well; check the address and postage and always include the sender's details too. It means we can get the package safely back to you if it can't be delivered. Use bubblewrap or extra paper to cover sharp corners and don't spare the tape!

Latest dates

Remember, the latest guaranteed date for delivery to far-off places such as the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong is 7 December for parcels and 12 December for cards.

For European destinations, the latest date is 13 December for parcels and 18 December for cards.

Letters and parcels for Britain need to be on their way no later than 18 December.



▲ Ecumenical Accompaniers like Ann travelling with a shepherd in the South Hebron Hills.

Searching for **hope** in Palestine

Age Action's Ann Moroney writes about her three months in Palestine as a human rights observer and her hopes for a just future in the Holy Land.

It was wonderful to visit places that I had been hearing about from the bible since early childhood and to see cities like Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

However, I hadn't come to this magical but troubled land as a tourist. I was fortunate to be able to take a break from my work with the Age Action Intercultural Project and to go there as part of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).

This World Council of Churches initiative works alongside Israelis and Palestinians in non-violent ways and advocates for an end

to Israel's military occupation of the West Bank, now in its fiftieth year, and for an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It also provides a protective presence for vulnerable Palestinian communities. Every three months about 25 Ecumenical Accompaniers from around the world are sent to Occupied Palestine to experience what life is like for Palestinians.

Life for Palestinians

My placement was in a very rural part of the West Bank called the South Hebron Hills. Most people in this beautiful, but arid,

area live a traditional life as shepherds and farmers. Aspects of their way of life seem barely changed since biblical times.

Food is of central importance in Palestinian culture and, as I feasted on delicious bread and other foods cooked in the traditional tabun oven, it was easy to imagine this beautiful land as a potential centre of agri-tourism.

However, the tortuous difficulties faced by farmers and their families in the South Hebron Hills provide a snapshot of the enormous problems faced by all Palestinians in almost every aspect of their lives because of the oppressive policies of the occupation.

These are countless but in-

clude military checkpoints which restrict peoples' movements, including to their own farms; the restraint on Palestinians building any structure without a permit the Israeli authorities generally refuse to grant, forcing people to build without one, making their homes vulnerable to demolition; the Separation Wall which cuts off access to Jerusalem; and the constant threat of violence from Israeli settlers.

The occupation has led to a drastic fall in living standards and deep levels of poverty. Because of its budget deficits, the Palestinian government is unable to meet the most basic needs of their society.

This political, social and legal environment obviously has a detrimental impact on everyone but older people, who have borne witness to it over so many years, are particularly vulnerable.

Signs of hope

In such a corrosive environment the resilience of Palestinian, and many Israeli, people frequently astonished me. Two people, both of whom happen to be older, stand out.

One of them is Hanna Barag, an Israeli woman who set up an organisation of Israeli women, called Machsomwatch, when she was in her late 60s. They monitor and document human rights abuses at Israeli army checkpoints. Twenty years on, Machsomwatch consists of 250 women and Hanna continues to be a leading member.

The other is Suleiman, an elder of the Bedouin community



▲ A member of Machsomwatch leads a discussion with a group of Palestinian children whose family has been moved off their land.

of Umm al Khair in the South Hebron Hills.

Suleiman told me that when he was a young man, following the founding of the Israeli state in 1948, the Bedouin were moved from the Negev desert and settled in their present home on land that cost 100 camels.

In 1983 the Israeli settlement of Carmel was established nearby on land that was taken

from the Bedouin and settlers have since waged a campaign of harassment against them. However, Suleiman continues to lead his community with wisdom and restraint.

Leaving Palestine, and all of the friends I made there, I took with me some comfort knowing that because of people like Hanna and Suleiman there is still hope for peace with justice in Palestine.

Volunteering:

The beating heart of Age Action

Deputy CEO **Lorraine Fitzsimons** highlights the value of volunteers to Age Action.

"The only voluntary thing about this organisation is joining and leaving it: in between it must be the best thing that we have ever done".

I've borrowed this quote from a former National President of the Society of St Vincent de Paul to emphasise the importance of volunteers in Age Action. It sets a gold standard, which I'm sure many of our volunteers reach through their dedicated work. It also challenges the view that volunteering is inferior to paid work. Our experience suggests that volunteers and paid staff work equally well and together in all our programmes, bound by their common commitment to support older people, especially those who are most disadvantaged. Staff may have technical knowledge and expertise which volunteers complement by their local knowledge. Their combined knowledge and skill ensures the effectiveness of our services for which we receive continuous compliments from the 40,000 people who use them.

Over 40,000 hours worked

Last year, there were 2,152 regular and occasional volunteers and 84 full and part time staff: our volunteers worked over



▲ Age Action volunteers in Galway enjoying a night out together. Photo: Arun Asan

40,000 hours, the equivalent of 24 full time paid staff, an absolutely priceless contribution. Volunteers and staff work together throughout the organisation ranging from the Board of Directors, to charity stores, to services like Care & Repair, Getting Started, lifelong learning, advocacy through the information service and Glór groups, fundraising such as raffles, bag packing in supermarkets, church gate collections and knitting groups. So, volunteers are the engine as well as the heart of Age Action: without them we couldn't run half of our services.

Recently there has been a wel-

come increase in the number of members becoming volunteers. Members are, therefore, better informed about our work when they are deciding our overall direction and policies. This development can only help to make us a more effective advocacy organisation in advancing the rights of older people and more effective policies for our ageing society.

Our future is bright if we can combine the commitment of many more volunteers with greater expertise among staff overseen by more knowledgeable members steering our future policies.



▲ Marty Whelan launching the #KnowPneumo campaign with support from a range of organisations, including Age Action.

Do you #KnowPneumo?

More than 500,000 people age 65 and older in Ireland are at risk of getting pneumococcal disease, or pneumo, this winter.

Age Action has teamed up with Diabetes Ireland, the Asthma Society of Ireland and Croí to encourage older people to talk to their GPs and to #KnowPneumo.

Pneumococcal disease is an infection caused by a type of bacteria and it can lead to serious illnesses.

Of those who get infected with pneumo, one in four will develop meningitis, a similar proportion will develop pneumonia and as many as one in ten may die as a result.

While a vaccine does exist currently 84 per cent, or more than 500,000, of over 65s are not protected against pneumo.

"It is disappointing that there are more than half a million 65 year olds and over in Ireland who have not been vaccinated against pneumo, or pneumococcal disease," said Dr Andrew Murphy, a Galway-based GP.

"We know the introduction of a nationwide vaccination programme for pneumo almost a decade ago, has resulted in a 90 per cent fall in cases.

"It is important to maintain that success rate and

continue to protect at-risk groups.

"If you are 65 or older, or in one of the official at-risk groups, speak to your GP or pharmacist about protecting yourself against pneumococcal disease this winter."

At-risk groups

As well as older people those who are officially at-risk include people with diabetes, asthma and heart disease, as well as those with chronic renal disease and chronic lung problems.

"Prevention is better than cure and the first step towards prevention is awareness," added Averil Power, CEO of the Asthma Society of Ireland.

"The pneumo bug is spread like the common cold, through coughing, sneezing and by close contact, and like the common cold, it can be hard to avoid."

To find out more on how to protect yourself or the ones you love against pneumococcal disease, talk to your GP or your pharmacist. You can also visit www.pneumo.ie or follow #KnowPneumo online.

A big **thank you** for making Age Action possible

It's that time of year again when we look back at all our fundraising events and activities that took place around the country in support of our work with older people writes Head of Fundraising **Caroline O'Connell**.

This was another challenging year for us as we sought to raise funds for our services but your continued and generous support enabled us to reach even more older people.

To put it simply, we just could not continue to do this without your help so we just want to say a really big thank you!

Whether you volunteered to help us at our St Patricks Day collection, Heart of Gold Pin Day or church-gate collections, supported our annual summer and Christmas raffles, knitted a hat for the innocent Big Knit, set up a Direct Debit, made a donation, ran a marathon or organised a fundraiser – your assistance was absolutely invaluable.

Lifeblood

This tremendous contribution highlights how our members are the lifeblood of our organisation and is most sincerely appreciated, especially by the older people who benefit from our services.

Most of our current fundraising activity focuses on the Care and Repair service, which receives no



▲ Age Action supporters Brenda Quigley and Joe Byrne present Deputy CEO Lorraine Fitzsimons with a cheque earlier this year for funds raised at Joe's retirement party.

statutory funding and is currently facing into its busiest period during the cold winter months.

If we could take this opportunity to ask you if you know of any company or business that might be interested in supporting this essential service, which helps older people to remain safe and well in their own homes for as long as they wish, then please let us know and we would be de-

lighted to follow up.

You can call **Daragh** in Dublin at 01 475 6989 or **Céara** in Cork at 021 206 7399 and they would be happy to take your call.

From all of us here in Age Action we wish you, your family and your loved ones a safe and happy festive season and thank you again for your loyal support in 2017. Beannachtaí na Nollaig daoibh uilig.

Tune in to Choir of Ages

Ireland's world-renowned choirmaster David Brophy is back with a new vision.

After his transformational experience with the High Hopes Choir where he used music to bring hope to people affected by homelessness, he is on a new mission.

He took on the daunting task of assembling an inter-generational choir with children and senior citizens from north Leitrim and the Crumlin/Walkinstown area of Dublin.

The first episode of Choir of Ages was on RTÉ 1 on Thursday 1 December. There are two more episodes to come, including footage from a concert organised during Positive Ageing Week

and generously supported by Bonavox.

This heart-warming and joyful series brings two generations together in a unique way never before seen on Irish television, proving once again, that music is a universal unifier no matter what your age.



▲ A scene from Choir of Ages.

U3Agroups

📍 Active Virginians U3A

Patricia at (087) 235-0515

📍 An Cosán U3A Tallaght

Imelda at (01) 462-8488

📍 Ballymun U3A

Peter at (087) 292-4001

📍 Ballyroan U3A

June at (01) 494-7030

📍 Blackrock U3A

Eileen at (087) 418-8607

📍 Blessington U3A

Peter at (087) 815-1018

📍 Bray U3A

Linda at (086) 045-1600

📍 Carrick-on-Shannon U3A

Margaret at (086) 837-2934

📍 Club 50, Donegal U3A

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📍 Dublin City U3A

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📍 Dun Laoghaire, Dalkey, Killiney U3A

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📍 Maynooth U3A

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📍 Lucan U3A

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For more information, email Sam O'Brien-Olinger, U3A Development Officer, at u3a@ageaction.ie or phone (01) 475-6989.

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📍 Waterford U3A

Josephine at (051) 871-037

Giving the gift of warmth

Age Action is delighted to partner with Zip on the 'Give the Gift of Warmth' campaign this winter.

Over the next few weeks we will be distributing over 1,000 boxes of fire logs kindly donated by Zip, with each box containing a two week supply of Zip fire logs!

This is a pilot project in 2017 and fire logs will be available in limited areas but, if successful, we hope to roll out the campaign nationally in 2018.

A special video will be aired on social media over the winter to highlight the campaign.

If you would like more information on whether the project is available in your area, please contact us at fundraising@ageaction.ie or call 01 475 6989.



▲ It's important to keep warm this winter.

Annual membership application

I wish to join Age Action and enclose € membership fee, plus €..... voluntary donation payable to Age Action Ireland Ltd.

If you are already an existing Age Action member and wish to renew your membership, please write your membership number here

.....

Full name:
(Block capitals please)

Address:.....
.....

Tel:

Email:
(Block capitals please)

Date:

FEES

- €20 Individual – retired/unwaged
- €40 Individual – employed
- €60 Voluntary Body
- €200 Statutory Agency
- €500 Commercial

STANDING ORDER

To the Manager
(Name of Bank/Building Society)

.....

Bank Address:

.....

.....

Please pay annually to Age Action Ireland, Permanent TSB, 70 Grafton Street, Dublin 2, BIC: IPBSIE2D

IBAN: IE82 IPBS 9906 2587 7790 21

the following amount €..... until further notice. Starting on: 1st day of January 20

Name:
(Block capitals please)

BIC:

IBAN:.....

Signature:.....

Please return to:

Membership Development,
Age Action Ireland Ltd,
30/31 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2.
Email: membership@ageaction.ie
Tel: (01) 475 6989
Fax: (01) 475 6011