

Stan keeps his feet on the ground

A Swanley resident with a passion for plants is continuing to stay fit and active in the garden thanks to our Falls Prevention Classes.

In Shape spoke with 82 year old Stan Long, a former landscape management professional and keen gardener.

Stan, who has lived in the town for more than 40 years, attends our Falls Prevention Classes that have helped more than 50 older people over the last year to stay safe, active and independent by staying on their own two feet.

Stan says: "Although I've not had a fall, in recent years I had become more and more concerned that I may have one. I was quite worried that if I started to lean forward, even a little, I would lose my balance, stumble and end up on the floor. I know that at my age this can have serious, even life-threatening consequences.

"But when I heard about the Council's Falls Prevention Classes I thought it may help so I decided to give it a go.

"The classes are all about building up your body strength with simple exercises, improving balance and using tactics to help you stay on your feet in a no pressure, supportive environment. Best of all you're encouraged to go at your own pace.

"You start with a few seat-based exercises then you stand up to do a few gentle exercises to build up your leg muscles. Later there are further gentle exercises to improve your upper body strength by building up the muscles in your arms and shoulders.

"Improving your balance is obviously important, so part of the course is spent walking on your toes and your heels.

"But crucially it's the tactics taught throughout the course which really help. One of the things you're told is how to gradually stand up from



a seated position, reducing your risk of falling.

"If the worst happens, and you do fall over, you are taught how to get back on your feet without panicking using various positions that minimise the risk of further injury.

"Thanks to the course I am much more confident on my feet and I really

believe that I can continue to stay active for longer. My wife Pauline is very pleased as well. She has seen my confidence grow since I took part in the Council's Falls Prevention Classes giving us more opportunities to spend time together in our garden."

To find out about classes near you, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/falls or call us on 01732 227000.

How the waist was won

Hartley resident Maris Goddard is looking great since she took part in our 'Why Weight' health programme in September.



The 53 year old Bexley Council worker has lost a staggering three stone and, for the first time ever, even enjoys shopping for ladies' fashion. What's more her healthy habits have rubbed off on her husband who has lost weight as well.

Maris spoke with In Shape about Why Weight and how it's changed her family's life for the better.

"I heard about Why Weight from my GP. I have Type 2 Diabetes and was at the limit of taking oral medication to control my condition. My GP gave me an ultimatum: lose weight to reduce my blood glucose level or begin insulin injections.

"I decided to join the Why Weight 12 week healthy weight programme. Every week we started with 30 minutes of exercise. Combined with weekly weigh ins and advice about healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle, it gave me all the tools I needed to lose weight."

"Prior to Why Weight I'd refused to have scales at home, but I found it helpful to have someone keeping

an eye on me during the weight ins, offering encouragement. The best thing was meeting up with likeminded people to share tips, experience, encouragement and plenty of laughs."

"Since finishing Why Weight, I take daily exercise and follow a healthy diet. For the first time in years I'm in control of my weight. I feel confident and even enjoy clothes shopping, something I've never done before."

"As well as losing three stone, my blood glucose level has reduced and I'm on track to reduce my medication. And, as my husband Colin eats the same as me, he too has lost two stone and is looking great! Now I weigh less than I did when we were married in 1981.

"I even have bathroom scales at home and look forward to weighing myself each week!"

The next Why Weight courses will begin on these dates and locations across the District.

- **Tuesday 22 April**, 6pm to 7.30pm, Sevenoaks Primary School
- **Thursday 24 April**, 1pm to 2.30pm, Swanley White Oak Leisure Centre
- **Monday 12 May**, 6pm to 7.30pm, Edenbridge Leisure Centre
- **Wednesday 2 July**, 6pm to 7.30pm, Swanley White Oak Leisure Centre
- **Friday 4 July**, 9.30am to 11am, West Kingsdown Community Centre
- **Friday 4 July**, 12 noon to 1.30pm, Sevenoaks Leisure Centre
- **Monday 22 September**, 6pm to 7.30pm, Edenbridge Leisure Centre
- **Tuesday 23 September**, 6pm to 7.30pm, Sevenoaks Primary School
- **Thursday 25 September**, 1pm to 2.30pm, Swanley White Oak Leisure Centre

To book a place, please call us on **01.732 227000** or e-mail healthyliving@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Why Weight is run by Sevenoaks District Council and funded by Kent Public Health

‘Yoganna’ enjoy our flexible fitness classes

Yoga originated in India around 5,000 years ago and focuses on strength, flexibility and breathing and, according to one Sevenoaks District resident, can help change your life.

This ancient form of exercise has become commonplace across the world and classes can be found in leisure centres, hospitals, community centres and many more places.

Sonja Ellis attends our over 50s class every week in Dunton Green Village Hall.

The classes, which are led by yoga expert Sabine Smith and run by Sevenoaks District Council, offer a friendly environment with gentle yoga and relaxation techniques.

Retired Sonja, who lives in Park Lane, Kemsing, says: ‘I have some joint problems and was told by various doctors to try out yoga and, as soon as I did, it changed my life!’

‘It’s helped to reduce my pain and discomfort by half and if I don’t go to a class I can really feel the difference. It’s kept me going mentally, is relaxing and makes me feel really good afterwards.’

The NHS says that yoga is a safe and effective way to increase physical activity, especially strength, flexibility and balance. It also says there’s some evidence that regular yoga practice is beneficial for people with high blood pressure, heart disease, aches and pains – including lower back pain – depression and stress.

Sonja has been attending one of Sabine’s yoga classes for around six years, having started the classes after moving to Kemsing from Cornwall.

She adds: ‘Attending the class has just given me another outlook. I’ve even opened a B&B, which is something I would not have done before!’

‘Sabine is a fantastic teacher and very diligent, watchful and mindful



when dealing with older people. We always have a laugh and I’ve made some like-minded friends as well.’

There are three classes held every week, with one of the classes offering informal chats on lifestyle information led by guest speakers. All abilities are welcome and there is no need to book, you can just turn up and enjoy the class!

For more information visit
www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/yoga

Your local yoga classes

- **Dunton Green Village Hall** – Wednesdays 3pm to 4.30pm – £2.50 per person
- **Shoreham Village Hall** – Wednesdays 1pm to 2pm – £2 per person
- **South Downs Retirement Village** – Tuesdays 10.30am to 11.30am – £2 per person

The over 50s yoga classes are funded by Kent Public Health.

A café with a difference!

Dementia affects not only those living with this life changing condition, it all too often has a profound affect on close family and carers.

But a new 'memory café' has started up in West Kingsdown offering support to both groups.

Alzheimer's & Dementia Support Services opened the doors to its latest café in Kingswood Court and, unlike most cafés, tea, coffee, cake and biscuits are free!

Rosa Mullis, Service Co-ordinator at Alzheimer's & Dementia Support Services, told In Shape how the latest memory café came about and how it's helping locals.

"The suggestion of a new memory café came from Jackie West, West Kingsdown's Community Warden. She felt there was a need for this facility as there is a growing number of people living with dementia in the area so we took up the idea. We always try to respond to local need and rely on people like Jackie to help us identify where our services would be best offered.

"We opened on 5 May offering a friendly, supportive and relaxed environment for people living with dementia and their carers.

"When you live with dementia your short term memory is often the first to be affected. Older memories can



become clearer and more important so we spend time at the café reminiscing, chatting and sharing memories.

"But we find carers can often become isolated. The café gives them the chance to talk with other carers and take a well earned break as one of our trained volunteers supports their loved ones.

"We also provide information about living

with dementia, services available locally and regularly invite guest speakers. It could be the Fire Service covering fire safety or a visit by nurses from our local memory clinic. We have even run gentle exercise classes.

"New people are always welcome and our volunteers will greet people at the door and ensure that they receive a warm welcome."



Your local Memory Cafés

Swanley Memory Café*

White Oak Court Sheltered Housing Unit, Sycamore Drive, Swanley, BR8 7WF
2pm to 4pm on the second Friday of each month

Hartley Memory Café*

Wellfield Community Hall, DA3 7EG
10am to 12 noon on the first Thursday of the month

West Kingsdown Memory Café*

Kingswood Court, 65 Church Road, West Kingsdown, TN15 6LN
10am to 12pm on the first Tuesday of the month

Sevenoaks Dementia Café**

The Stag Theatre, London Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1ZZ
2pm to 4pm on the first and third Tuesday of the month

* For information about these cafés please call Alzheimer's and Dementia Support services on 01474 533090

** For information about this café please call the Alzheimer's Society on 01892 559410