

NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2024

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

Welcome to the last Newsletter of 2024. It has been a very busy year and we hope you feel you have been kept informed about all things relevant to the Society. Please read the Newsletter and keep up to date with areas that are being progressed.

REMEMBRANCE DAY – SUNDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2024

On Remembrance Sunday, Gez Gibbs, Non-Executive Director, laid the commemorative wreath for the Society at Gravesend Memorial. The Board places its thanks to Gez on record for once again representing the Society.



MEMBER SURVEYS

If you are a legacy member (pre December 2022), you will have received a link to complete a Consumer Duty survey on SurveyMonkey. The purpose of the survey is for us to know if the terms and conditions of your policy are clear and understood, if you consider your policy provides value for money and if you require additional support. If you have not yet completed the survey, we are asking you to do this by the end of the year. The surveys consist of 5-6 questions to which there are no wrong answers and will only take a couple of minutes to complete. We appreciate that being asked to do surveys all the time can be annoying but it provides us with a picture of how we are doing, what we can do to improve and if members are aware of all the benefits available to them.



The survey results will be analysed in the New Year and an update will be provided in a future Newsletter.

HAVE YOUR SAY CAMPAIGN

HAVE YOUR SAY

This is your community, so have your say on how we invest in Gravesham.

Vote NOW for a chance to WIN great prizes!

We have a new brand – but our commitment remains the same.

We continue to invest in people and the places that matter to them. But no one knows your community better than you do.

We've shortlisted **six local community projects to invest in** and we'd like you to help us **select the overall winner**. Choose from our selection overleaf, visit the website and cast your vote – it's that simple!

There's no catch, no right or wrong answer.

We simply want to know how **TOGETHER**, we can further enhance our environment that we all value so much.

Have your say on where we invest in our people and community!

Gravesham Friendly
People. Community. Investment.

At the launch of Gravesham Friendly, the 'Have Your Say' campaign was introduced that included a leaflet drop to 25,000 properties in Gravesham. The campaign allows members, and local residents, to select a charity that the Society will support in 2025, from a short list of six. A prize draw to win an iPad and runner up prizes of Amazon vouchers will be selected after the closing date of 4 January 2025.

Every vote counts and the Board is keen for members to choose who the Society will sponsor in 2025. The charities are local to Gravesham and will benefit greatly from the financial support. If you have not yet cast your vote, please follow this link to view further details and register your vote on the website.

<https://www.graveshamfriendly.co.uk/haveyoursay>.

INTRODUCER SCHEME

To help spread the word of the Society, an Introducer scheme has been established. This works in a similar way to the Member-Get-Member Scheme in that individuals are rewarded for introducing people to the Society who subsequently become members. Introducers are usually professional people who have access to a large network and database of customers but are not permitted to give advice on whether the sickness product is suitable for potential members. At the time of writing, two Introducers have joined the scheme.



MEMBER-GET-MEMBER

Recommend a friend, family member or colleague to Gravesham Friendly

And earn **£50** for every new member you recommend!

Help a friend or family member become part of something special.

is there someone you think would benefit from becoming a member of Gravesham Friendly society?

As a loyal society member we want to reward you for introducing members of your family, friendship group or work colleagues, passing on the peace of mind that comes with joining the society and having affordable Sickness Benefit cover and discretionary benefits.

“The Society has helped me a great deal with sickness, dental and optical claims, thank you. I want my grandchildren to join now.”
Kathleen Fowler

It's simple to introduce a friend to Gravesham. Once they take out a Sickness Benefit Plan and tell us you introduced them, we'll send you £50 as a thank you.

It's as simple as that!

Simply tell your friend to enter your name in the 'Recommended By' section when filling out the application form. Once your friend has applied and paid their first three months premium, we'll send you £50 as a thank you.

The graphic features the Gravesham Friendly logo (a stylized 'G' and 'F' with 'Gravesham Friendly' and 'People, Community, Environment' below it) and a photo of three people (two women and one man) looking at a laptop. A hand is shown holding a £50 banknote.

The Member-Get-Member reward scheme is still operating and you can earn £50 for every new member that joins the Society from your recommendation.

As members who have enjoyed the benefits of belonging to a Society that puts its members first, thrives on helping its members and never forgets that this is your Society, we hope you want friends and family to enjoy the same benefits.

Since its introduction in September 2022, 58% of new members have joined as a result of the Member-Get-Member scheme. Thank you to the members who have introduced friends and family and please continue to keep spreading the word.

CLAIMS INFORMATION

As reported in the Half Yearly Meeting Newsletter, 80% of claims are now received electronically which is helping to achieve our ambition of a paperless office. Discretionary benefit claims have also increased by 10% in volume over the same 9 month period in 2023 and 2024 and by 8% in value.

It has never been easier to submit a claim digitally. But don't just take our word for it, below are some quotes from members who were encouraged to submit a claim online:

- “I was so lucky to be helped by Jo that all my problems disappeared. Her approach to dealing with a wrinkly was 1st class. I cannot thank her enough”
- “This is the first claims experience with this system and it has worked well for me. Impressed”
- “I find the whole process extremely easy”
- “I think the process is brilliantly simple and communications are clear, thank you”
- “The new claims system is much improved and simple to use”

If you need assistance to complete this, our friendly team is happy to navigate you through the process. A video will be added to the website in due course detailing the procedure step by step. Please try it and let us know what you think. If you submit claims via email, we will reach out and ask you to try the online version which negates the necessity to complete a claims form.

Please refer to the Half Yearly Meeting Newsletter for further facts and figures about the membership which makes interesting reading:

<https://www.graveshamfriendly.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/NEWSLETTER-Half-Yearly-Meeting-November-2024.pdf>



LAUNCH OF GRAVESHAM FRIENDLY



The publicity event to launch Gravesham Friendly to Gravesham Council and local businesses was held on Thursday 24 October at Shorne Woods. The event was well attended and the Deputy Chair of Gravesham Borough Council was very positive about the Society. Work has continued to build relationships with Gravesham Council and local businesses and spread the word of the Society in an effort to recruit new members and support the Gravesham community. More information will be provided in the next newsletter.

MEMBER FORUM

The second meeting of the Member Forum was held on Tuesday 29 October 2024. Philip Davies spoke about the Member Forum at the Half Yearly meeting and has provided the following information.

“My name is Philip and I’ve been a member of Gravesham Friendly ‘The Anglos’ as many of my local friends and members affectionately call it, since 1996, so some 28 years.



Over these years I’ve introduced a number of friends to Gravesham Friendly and I feel sure, like you, they would join me in celebrating their decision to become members. In those past 28 years I’ve attended AGM’s and half yearly meetings at the old Anglo Saxons Hall and I may well have met some of you there personally. Afterwards, clutching our £5 expenses we’d go to the Regents Fish Bar as it was invariably a Friday night.

Just over a year ago at a Gravesham Friendly (GF) meeting, an opportunity arose for me to somehow give something back and I willingly took it. The GF Board, as part of its overall strategy of engagement with members, decided to create a Members Forum. Following perhaps the most pleasant interview I’ve ever attended, I was approved to be a representative for YOU on the Members Forum. In doing so my brief is to convey to the Board, totally unedited:

- Your opinions
- Your likes and dislikes
- Your ideas
- Your suggestions for improvement
- Your suggestions for change

It is not for me to feedback only what I agree or disagree with; nor what I consider a good idea and to exclude those ideas I do not think will work. I will not just present suggestions I like to the exclusion of those I do not. That is not what the Board seek or expect from the Member Forum. With that in mind I really need to hear from you, the Members, to facilitate what we have set up.

Finally, and no less importantly, additional Member Forum representatives are needed. The work and time commitment is not onerous, there have been two meetings this year with the Board via

zoom with the primary objective of making this amazing mutual society work even better for you the Members.

Please contact Dee Turtle at dee@graveshamfriendly.co.uk to either apply to become a member of the Member Forum and arrange an initial meeting with the Board or to meet me by telephone, zoom or in a pub/coffee bar to discuss further. It's fun! Come join us."

REPAIR CAFÉ



Long term Gravesham Friendly members Matthew and Philip help organise and operate Repair Cafés. They extend an invitation to all Gravesham Friendly Members to bring along your broken household items, electricals, bikes, clothing etc. etc. for repair. They aim to save you money and the environment by preventing 'stuff' being discarded to landfill.

Have a cuppa while you wait, watch and learn from the repairers. The service is offered by volunteers and FREE but donations are welcome to keep the repair shop repairing. New repairers are also very welcome.

Venues: St George's Church Hall, Gravesend - first Thursday of every month, 10am – 2pm, next dates 2 January and 6 February

Vigo Village Hall, Vigo – second Saturday of every month, 10am – 2pm, next dates 11 January and 8 February

HALF YEARLY MEETING 2024

The Half Yearly meeting was held at 1pm on Friday 1 November in the Masonic Lodge in Gravesend. The Newsletter detailing the information provided at the meeting is available to read on the website. Please ensure you read the contents and keep up to date with events in your Society. Thank you to the members that attended in person.



OFFICE CLOSURE FOR CHRISTMAS

The office will close at mid-day on Tuesday 24 December and re-open on Thursday 2 January 2025.



A very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year to all our members from the Board and staff. To our legacy members, thank you for being loyal members over the years. To our new members, thank you for joining the Society and placing your faith in us. A lot has been achieved this year and we will continue to progress the Society to ensure it remains relevant for existing members and future generations.

CONTACT US

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any help, or have any suggestions of what you would like to be included in future newsletters, using any of the methods listed below:

Post: The Old Rectory, Springhead Road, Northfleet, DA11 8HN

Telephone: 01474 567050

Email: info@graveshamfriendly.co.uk