## *Join our volunteer team to help improve your physical & mental wellbeing*

We live in a world that often feels fast-paced and demanding, with this in mind it's important to find ways to enhance our wellbeing. Volunteering is one of the most rewarding and fulfilling paths to achieve better physical and mental health.

The act of giving can significantly enhance not only your life, but the lives of those around you. Volunteering is not just about giving, it's also a journey of personal growth and can have a positive impact on your community. By engaging with others you can nurture a healthier and happier life.

Why not join our Helping Hands Scheme? Whether you choose to volunteer a few hours a month or dive into a more committed role, you can enrich the lives of the people you support and also your own wellbeing.

***Physical Benefits of Volunteering***

◊ Some volunteer opportunities require physical effort- being on your feet moving around and engaging in hands-on work can boost your heart rate and overall stamina.

◊ Regular physical activity can strengthen your immune system, making you less susceptible to illness.

◊ The combination of physical activity and social interaction can help boost your energy levels- as the body releases endorphins, they can help to elevate your mood and energy.

***Mental Wellbeing Benefits of Volunteering***

◊ Engaging in meaningful activities can provide a sense of purpose and accomplishments, which can help alleviate feelings of stress and anxiety.

◊ Volunteering releases the body's natural feel-good chemical (endorphins), many volunteers report feeling happier and more fulfilled after helping others.

◊ Provides an opportunity to meet new people and interact with the community. Social connections are vital for mental health, volunteering can help forge lasting friendships.

***If you are interested in volunteering with us, please speak to Eddie or Betty in the club or call into the shop and have a chat with Catriona or Deirdre.***

## Bells of Ireland

Despite the name, this plant in the mint family (Lamiaceae) is **not from Ireland** but is native to western Asia, around Turkey, Syria and the Caucasus. The Ireland part of the common name **refers to the green color of the calyces**. With their vibrant green colour and their bell-like shape, they are often connected with other Celtic symbols and represent **good luck, prosperity, and abundance**. Deceivingly simple to grow, the blossoms of Bells of Ireland, *Moluccella laevis*, are real crowd-pleasers. But not for their flashy colour (they're green), instead for their sheer individuality. Looking like no other flower, they stand tall and shout out their uniqueness by just being one heck of a fun plant. They're a fantastic addition to a garden and have a lovely sweet, vanilla-like fragrance.

***Sending our warmest thoughts and well wishes to all who are sick at home and in hospital***


southwark irish pensioners project
Charity No. 1088387
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www.irishinlondon.org


# Southwark Irish Pensioners Project Newsletter

May 2026

## Go raibh míle maith agat / thanks a million

### *to our wonderful volunteers*

June is Volunteer month, which gives us the perfect opportunity to say a huge thank you to everyone who gives their time, energy, & expertise to the Project. Quite simply, we couldn't do all that we do without you.

Whether you're making tea in the club, helping with activities, supporting the office with admin, setting out furniture, befriending someone who cannot get out and about very often, or doing the many small things that make such a big difference to people's lives- every contribution matters and is truly appreciated.

**We can never thank you enough for all that you do.**

As a small token of our appreciation, we would love you to join us at our annual volunteer gathering at the Prince of Wales Pub, St George's Road, SE1, where Margaret and Tom will once again be putting on a wonderful spread for everyone.

Please save the date: **Wednesday 10th June from 6.30pm.** We hope to see you all there!

## Thank You Margaret and Tom

We would like to say a huge thank you to Margaret & Tom at the Prince of Wales Pub for their continued support of the Project.

Margaret and Tom have been wonderful supporters of the Project for many years and, more recently, fantastic hosts of our annual volunteer event.

Everyone who walks through their doors is greeted with a warm Irish welcome. The staff are always friendly, attentive, and provide an excellent service with a smile.

If you are ever in the area, do pop in and enjoy their delicious food menu- you'll be made to feel right at home.

**The Prince of Wales**
**51 St Georges Road, London, SE1 6ER**

**The Irish ambassador to Britain, Martin Fraser, hosted a reception on Monday 18th May, in honour of the President of Ireland Catherine Connolly and her husband, Brian McEnery, at the Irish Embassy in London.**

It is President Connolly's first official visit to Britain since her inauguration in November when she spoke about her commitment to engaging with the Irish diaspora. She said there is 'hardly a sector' of British life that has not been influenced by the Irish.

'The Irish contribution to British society is as diverse as can be imagined,' she added. 'From the arts and culture, to healthcare, education, construction and infrastructure, as well as scientific professional and technical services.'

**SIPP President Nora Higgins attended the event and is pictured with the President.**

# DAY SERVICE CALENDAR

## ♪ SIPP Singalong ♪

Join us for our monthly singalongs, held on the **second Thursday of each month in the Bermondsey Club from 1pm**. Eddie will be serenading us with Irish songs and much loved classics and the singalong is a great way to come together and celebrate the fantastic songs we all love. Start warming up those vocal chords!

## Summer Fair Tuesday 21st July!

We are organising a summer fair which will be held in the Rouel Road Tenants Hall in Bermondsey. This is a great way to get together and raise funds for the charity. If you knit or sew, bake, make things or have items that can be sold, bring them along! And of course, there will be tea and cake!
Please speak to Eddie if you have any questions or queries.

## QUIZ!

Put on your thinking caps and brush up on your general knowledge for our monthly quizzes! From history to music, geography to film and TV, we will be hosting a quiz on **the first Thursday of every month at 1pm in the Bermondsey Club.** It's always wonderful to see the enthusiasm at the quizzes, so come along and test your knowledge!

## ***SOUTHWARK PENSIONERS DAY TRIPS (SPC)***

Southwark Pensioners (SPC) are organising several day trips throughout the summer:

**Folkestone** - **Thu 4 June**

**Broadstairs** - **Tue 28 July**

**Eastbourne** - **Thu 13 August**

**Walton-on-the-Naze** - **Fri 11 September**

**Windsor** - **Mon 30 November**

Tickets £18 each trip to book please phone **020 7708 4556**

## 20 YEARS OF YOGA

From the lunch hall in Spa Road to a room with a garden view at Evelyn Coyle House, the room at No 6 Market Place, the room above the library, All Saints Community Hall, post Covid, back to the room above the Library with its floods and now twenty years later the SIPP Yoga class is currently going strong back at the cosy room in Market Place.

My long-suffering Iyengar Yoga teacher and friend Brigid Philip heard SIPP was thinking about starting a Yoga class and looking for a teacher, I was offered up. I got lost coming for the interview and Bridie rescued me from somewhere off Jamaica Road! I clearly remember being told not to be disappointed if at the end of a month people lost interest and the class got the chop. Expectations clearly weren't high!

And yet here we are celebrating twenty years of class and poses: Mountain, Tree, Triangle, Warriors 1, 2 and 3, bending, stretching, twisting and the blessing of Savasana/ relaxation to finish. Connecting body and mind and soul.

During my training I was told; 'Often you never know why students come to class and that's OK.' The SIPP yoga students past and present are a hardy bunch, undaunted by bad weather and the horrors of South London bus journeys.

Old hands welcome new people reminding them that all there is to do is breathe and smile.

As the class heads into its 21st year we remember so fondly the students who are no longer with us and those unable to come to class. They are missed.

Congratulations to stalwarts Hannah and Pat, they've been there from the start when we were all finding how to stand even and firm on our own two feet and quieten our scattered minds.

Thank you to all at SIPP for your whole-hearted support through these years. With our hands together, Namaste, we praise you.

***Jane Williams***

# ADVICE CORNER

## Making a Will

Making a will is not just about money; it prevents the law from deciding who inherits your belongings & protects your family from unnecessary stress. For those who have moved across the Irish sea, managing assets requires specific planning. You must explicitly list any family homes, land, or bank accounts remaining in Ireland to ensure they are handled correctly.

While a UK will is generally valid in Ireland, international legal red tape frequently delays the inheritance process for your heirs. To avoid these delays, you can establish a separate, simple Irish will for your property back home. Fortunately, long-standing tax agreements between the UK & Ireland guarantee that your beneficiaries will not be unfairly penalised with double taxation for your cross-border life.

**The Essentials: What to do next:**

◊ **Choose your "Executors":** Ask 1 or 2 people you really trust. If most family are in Ireland, it often helps to have one executor in the UK for UK paperwork.

◊ **Share your funeral wishes:** A few simple notes (service/ cremation, any pre-paid plans) can save your family worry later and make sure your arrangements are followed.

◊ **Think about the "Home" journey:** If you'd like burial in Ireland, or your ashes returned, say it clearly so your wishes are easy to follow.

◊ **Write it down:** It doesn't always need a solicitor. The key is that it's signed by you & witnessed by two independent adults.

◊ **Keep it safe:** Keep the original somewhere secure- and let a friend, family member, or the Project know where it is.

**Update regularly:** Have another look after big changes (like a new grandchild) so it still matches what you want.

## Looking After Your Care and Wishes

It's a common worry: "What happens if I'm in hospital and I can't tell the doctors what I want?"

Whether it's a particular treatment or simply being cared for with the dignity and cultural understanding you deserve, there are simple steps you can take now. Writing down your wishes helps you stay in control and takes a real weight off your family and friends as well as the Project's community team, who may advocate for you in hospital.

These documents speak for you when you can't, keeping your wishes at the centre of medical decisions.

**Writing down your care wishes:**

~ **Advance Statement (Your Preferences):** Note what matters to you- diet, faith, and who you'd like involved in decisions. It's not legally binding, but doctors **must** consider it when deciding your "best interests".

~ **Advance Decision (Refusing Treatment):** Sometimes called a "Living Will", this **legally binding** document lets you refuse specific treatments in future. For life-sustaining treatment, it must be written, signed, and witnessed.

## Hospital Visits

If you have been admitted to hospital, please phone us on: **020 7237 5841 / 0800 15 777 83** to let us know which hospital and ward you are in, & if you would like a visit from one of the community team.

Our team will visit you regularly to ensure you have everything you need and to chat about any concerns or worries you may have, including how you will manage when you are discharged home and what help you might need as you recover.

### *Have your Grab Bag' ready!*

If you go into hospital unexpectedly, it helps not to be hunting for basics like your toothbrush or glasses. A small bag ready (or a checklist on the fridge) lets you focus on getting better. Adding a few comforts from home can make your hospital stay easier.

**What to pack:**

**The Paperwork:** A copy of your **Advance Statement**, plus next of kin phone numbers.

**Medication List:** Bring your prescriptions, or a 'Green Bag' with the tablet boxes, so hospital staff know exactly what you take.

**Personal Comforts:** Slippers with good grip, a comfy dressing gown, and change for the trolley or phone.

**Communication:** Mobile phone & an **extra long charging cable**, hearing aids (plus spare batteries) and glasses.

**The 'Where is it?' Note:** A simple card for nurses saying where your Will and important papers are kept at home.

**A Touch of Home:** A book, radio & headphones, or a family photo can really help on long afternoons.

## Looking After Your Care and Wishes *continued*

~ **Health & Welfare Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA):** Choose someone you trust to make health & care decisions for you if you lose capacity.

~ **Talk & Share:** Talk it through with your GP and family. If you write anything down, give your GP a copy to add to your NHS notes.

~ **Local Support:** If you're not sure where to start, give us a call on **0800 15 777 83.**