

# The Market Harborough Holiday at Home

Run under the auspices of Churches Together in Harborough.

The aim is to provide a week of interesting activities and entertainment for older people in the community, especially any who normally are not able to have a nice holiday. The event is not overtly evangelistic. The fact that it is held on church premises and run by the local churches is on the publicity. We try to provide a welcoming and caring atmosphere, and to communicate kingdom values.

Our programme runs over five days in mid-August. Some churches run it over several weeks with one day a week. We use church premises with plenty of rooms on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. On Thursday, we offer an outing by coach to somewhere interesting. Travel time is usually no more than one hour. Sometimes we have two places we visit which gives greater appeal and allows for two shorter outbound journeys.

On the church-based days we offer a nice lunch. We are blessed to have a good catering team and commercial kitchen. We offer main course and desert followed by coffee or tea. We are always prepared for special dietary needs. On Friday, we give the catering team a break and provide sensible portions of fish and chips followed by ice cream wafers (cut from a block). On the outing people either bring a packed lunch or make their own arrangements.

A team, drawn from across the churches holds usually three planning meetings. Team members have various skills including marketing and publicity, local knowledge, and administration. The meetings are mainly concerned with generating ideas for activities, all-together times and the outing.

The programme for the four church-based days is as follows:

9.40 Registration opens (refreshments and daily programme available)

10.00 Session One -we offer a choice of four activities, with typically 10 – in each activity. Some management is needed to seek to average out group sizes. Activities we have held include cooking on a budget, flower arranging, art lesson, using the internet, scratch choir, drama and story-telling, chair-based exercises, all kinds of craft, and carpet bowls.

11.10 Coffee Break

11.30 Session Two (all together) Entertainment or talk. We have had talks on home & personal security from the police, talks from the Fire Service, talks from solicitors on relevant topics, musical sessions, and community singing.

12.10 The Lite Bite - Thought for the day (but not a sermon!)

12.15 Lunch

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Most activity leaders and speakers offer services free, but we cover any costs and offer a fee.

This annual programme has been running since around 2011. It's popularity results in considerable return custom. We now plan the advertising timing carefully and leaflet sheltered housing to give new people an opportunity to book in first. We take bookings from four weeks before the event and make clear that no bookings are taken before that date. One of the team manages the bookings, carefully noting the days when people plan to come.

We currently charge £6 per day; £10 for the outing providing they attended at least one other day. Otherwise there is a £15 charge for the outing. This is insufficient to cover all costs (we pay for the use of the church premises and caretaking). We have attracted grants from a local charity and some commercial businesses in the area.

Other important aspects include ensuring that the whole building is accessible with sufficient toilet provision, there is first aid provision on each day of the week, and that there is appropriate insurance and DBS certification.

Anyone requiring further information may contact the Rev Barry Osborne by email, [barry@ruralmissions.org.uk](mailto:barry@ruralmissions.org.uk)