

NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2025

2025 AGM

The 2025 AGM will be held on Friday 2 May at 7pm at Cyclopark, Watling Street, Gravesend, DA11 7NP

2025 AGM

This year's AGM will be held in accordance with Society Rule 24.1 and take place at 7pm on Friday 2 May at Cyclopark, Watling Street, Gravesend, DA11 7NP. The venue has ample car parking which will be provided free of charge to delegates attending the AGM.

Electronic voting will be continued in 2025 and is available to all members who have registered an email address or reside in a property where an email address has been registered, have been a number for over 12 months and who reside in the UK.

The service will once again be provided by Civica Election Services. Please note the following steps for voting.

1. You will receive an email from CES Civica on Monday 31 March 2025 containing two security codes.
2. The email will contain a link to access the voting website and information relating to the AGM.
3. Enter the two security codes included in your email, onto the entry screen
4. Once you login from this screen, information regarding the AGM and Resolutions will be presented.
5. As with previous years, you can select either the Chair or another person, who does not have to be a member, as your proxy. You can also direct your proxy on how to vote on the Resolutions.
6. With respect to Resolutions 3, 4 and 5, it is important that you read the biographies for the re-elections of the Non-Executive Directors and the Executive Director before voting or directing your proxy how to vote. Alternatively, you can leave your vote to the discretion of your proxy.

The option to vote in person is also available if you are planning to attend the AGM in person or by zoom.

If you have not received an electronic vote and believe you should have, or you wish to request a postal vote, being mindful of the closing date of Wednesday 30 April 2025, please contact the office. For all other queries, please email support-cesvotes@civica.co.uk quoting your membership number, name and email address.

The Notice of the AGM is attached. The Information Booklet and AGM Notice will also be available to view from the voting website.

Member engagement is essential to Friendly Societies and to support this, the Board has pledged to donate £1 to a local charity for every vote cast. Please support your Society and a local charity by voting and if possible, by attending the AGM either in person or via zoom.

CYCLOPARK

Cyclopark has been chosen as the venue for the 2025 AGM as the Society has agreed a three year partnership with Cyclopark, an local organisation based in Gravesham with a similar ethos and culture to the Society. Cyclopark offers much more than cycling and is an asset to the local community. More details will be provided at the AGM.

SICKNESS PRODUCT – PRICE INCREASE

As advised on 20 February, the Society's £100 per week sickness policy has been reviewed and premiums will be increased. A new level of £250 per week sickness benefit, with a higher monthly premium, will also be introduced that members can switch to, if preferred. The membership start date will continue from the original membership date and not the date of the switch. The release date has been delayed until April therefore there is still time to recommend the sickness product to family, friends and colleagues before the price increase.



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 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, 54% 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.

Since advising of the imminent price rise, ten new members have joined thanks to your recommendation. That is a remarkable achievement for which we sincerely thank you.

MEMBER SURVEYS

Thank you to all legacy members that completed the Consumer Duty survey on SurveyMonkey. Your responses have been insightful.

Internal meetings have been held to discuss and analyse the responses. As a result, the website is being updated to incorporate requests for additional information to be known such as a member's remaining discretionary benefit balance and if any additional insured or discretionary benefits are payable. The website is also being updated to allow multiple claims to be submitted without having to log out and back in again. We will let you know when the additional features are available to use.



A further member survey is planned to obtain feedback on:

- As relatively few members attended the November 2024 Half Yearly meeting, should the member meetings be reduced to one per annum, namely the AGM?
- Additional suggested discretionary benefits and whether these would appeal to members.
- Member's thoughts on the discounts and value for money from the Parliament Hill service.

Please take the time to complete the surveys and let us know your view as the information is extremely beneficial.

HAVE YOUR SAY CAMPAIGN

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 allowed members and local residents to select a charity, from a shortlist of six, for the Society to support in 2025. The winners of the prize draw to win an iPad and runner up prizes of Amazon vouchers were selected at random by member and Councillor of Gravesham Borough Council, Lyn Milner.

Thank you to all members that voted. The vote to determine which charity the Society will support was so close that the Board approved the top two charities would receive funding of £1,500 per year for the next 3 years – the Repair Café and Gravesham Sanctuary.



Matthew Ashton and Philip Davies, from the Repair Café, are grateful recipients of the grant.

"Gravesham Repair Café are absolutely delighted to be the recipients of this generous grant from Gravesham Friendly. This will enable us to expand and consolidate our activities by providing the residents of Gravesham with a service that repairs all manner of items like small domestic electrics, bikes, clocks, tech, clothing and much much more. Our Repairers at the Repair Café are a super bunch of dedicated volunteers, both male and female who by fixing your 'stuff' will save you money whilst helping save our Planet".

Matthew Guest, General Manager of Gravesham Sanctuary provided the following statement to members:



"Gravesham Sanctuary are truly grateful to the amazing team and members at Gravesham Friendly for the kind generosity and encouraging support towards our work. Your contribution will go towards covering rental and running costs of our day centre, which will enable us to help our guests access essential means of support in order to get the care and direction they need."

The winners of the prize draw were:

First Prize	Peter Herbert	iPad
Runner-Up	Marion Chapman)
Runner-Up	Jane Beadle) £50 Amazon voucher
Runner-Up	Catherine Marshall)

Peter Herbert asked for his prize to be exchanged for charity donations and the following donations were made on Peter's behalf:

£150	Cancer Research UK
£100	Gravesham Sanctuary
£79	Battersea Dogs and Cats Home



Our congratulations go to the volunteers at the Repair Café and staff at Gravesham Sanctuary as well as the prize draw winner, Peter Herbert, and the runners-up. Our thanks go to Peter Herbert for donating his prize to the above charities. This demonstrates the Society's ethos of supporting the community and helping charities is echoed by our members.

We will be working with both organisations through the community partnership agreement. Updates on how the grant funding is helping local people will be included in future Newsletters.

CHANGE OF DETAILS



When submitting an insured or discretionary claim online, you may have noticed that you are now able to submit change of details electronically via the website. Supporting documentation is required for a change of name, address or bank details – guidance is available to identify the documentation required. Once the details have been verified at the office, these will be available to view the next time you logon to your member record from the website.

CLAIMS INFORMATION

Information regarding the Discretionary Benefits paid and number of Discretionary Benefit Claims processed, split by category, for the period 2021 – 2024, is detailed in the AGM Information Booklet. The number of members claiming has increased marginally and it is positive to note the upward trend.

The number of members claiming online and via email consistently achieves over 80% per month. The online platform for submitting claims electronically via the website constantly achieves a 5* rating for its ease and simplicity. Staff are always on hand to help you through the process and a link to a video providing a step by step guide of how to claim online will be circulated imminently.

MEMBER FORUM

The Member Forum still needs additional members to join. The time commitment is not onerous and member's views are always welcome and considered.

Please contact me via email at dee@graveshamfriendly.co.uk for an application form.



REPAIR CAFÉ



A reminder of venues and dates for the Repair Café where members are welcome to take items for repair or to have a free coffee and chat about what the Repair Café can do for you and the wider community.

St George's Church Hall, Gravesend - first Thursday of every month, 10am – 2pm, next event 3 April 2025

Vigo Village Hall, Vigo – second Saturday of every month, 10am – 2pm, next event 12 April 2025

OFFICE

Commencing from Monday 31 March, all staff will work from home on Mondays. The office will therefore be unmanned on Mondays but staff members are available online to answer queries and respond to emails and can be reached via the office telephone number. This change will not affect the high level of service we aim to achieve but if you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to let us know.

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