

## The security issue: how to stay safe as you age

It's wonderful to be feeling safer again after yet another lockdown. On that note, this issue of The Village focuses on security – keeping yourself safe in your home, online, and when out and about.

The biggest threat for seniors today is online security. With cheques being phased out - and thanks to COVID-19 - we're having to do most of our finances and communications online so it's essential to stay up to date with technology and to be aware of scams (see page 2).

As we age, driving at night or at peak times can be stressful, so many of our members use a driving service such as Driving Miss Daisy (see page 4). Staying safe is not about being fearful or not doing things, it's about finding new safe ways to do them.



**Bonnie Robinson**  
CEO, Virtual Village East



## Say 'scram' to scams

Whether it's investment scams, tax scams, door-to-door scams, identify theft or subscription scams, online scams are becoming commonplace and increasingly sophisticated – and, unfortunately older people are often targeted.

They can range from offers of romance through to promises of payment if you send them something. "Scammers often spend a lot of time grooming people and they do it really well," says Mal Drummond of Age Concern.

He says another trick is to prey on fear. "Scammers will often pretend to be from the IRD, power companies, telco's or banks

**“ Older people tend to be more trusting and sometimes become more involved than they want to be. ”**

and threaten action if you don't pay up. When they hear that threat, people tend to stop thinking rationally.”

He said older people tend to be more trusting and sometimes become more involved than they want to be. And the emotional impact can be devastating. "If you're on a pension, money lost through scams can have a significant impact – so think twice before you say yes to anything and remember it's okay to say 'no' or 'I'll get back to you'.”

*Read our top tips overleaf for staying safe from scammers....*



1. **Never** provide your personal information over the phone, via text message, email or the Internet.
2. **Stranger danger** – be wary of anyone who suddenly tries to befriend you. Ask around and find out more about them.
3. **Check up on them** - If someone calls you wanting money or information, ask for their number – or say 'I'll get back to you' and call their head office.
4. **Buyer beware** - If you're buying something online, pick it up yourself (or ask someone you trust) and pay cash, so you can check it before you pay for it.
5. **Door knockers** – if possible, install a peephole at the front door so you can see who's knocking.
6. **Ask for help** – Not sure how to bank online or do other online tasks? Ask a friend or family member to teach you – or attend a course like the one below.
7. **Keep it confidential** - be careful with personal details. Any letters at home with private details on them should be shredded or burnt, not just put in the bin.
8. **Remember** - if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!



## My environment: keeping safe and secure at home

If you choose to keep living at home as you age, it's a good idea to 'age-proof' your environment, such as adding handrails, non-slip tiles or an emergency button – before you need them.

And if you might need help with home and garden maintenance one day, start considering who might assist with these tasks. Think too about your options if you can't drive in the future – such as a driving company, public transport or help from a family member.

### Questions to ponder:

- If I'm still living in my own home, is it future-proofed for ageing?
- Does my environment feel safe and secure?
- Am I computer and/or smartphone literate?
- Do I have a list of trusted tradespeople?
- Do I have someone who can help with housework, gardening, driving or home maintenance if needed?



# Getting to know Chris Martin, VVE member



**Chris Martin**

Chris and his wife Clare have been married for 26 years and have lived in Pakuranga since 2000 with their six children.

Chris has been a member of Lions for over 40 years (and is still very active), plus he's a member of SeniorNet and volunteers with VVE. "I keep the lawns tidy, but I'm NOT a gardener," he says. "Volunteering keeps me well involved with the community."

"I've been a runner for sixty years – but at 60, both knees told me they'd had enough," he says. That doesn't stop him from walking long distances (his longest walk so far is 25km!).

Chris believes that the biggest benefits of belonging to VVE are meeting people and attending our coffee & catch-up mornings, information meetings and book swaps. Initially he heard about VVE at SeniorNet meetings and says that "curiosity" inspired him to join. "I was interested in meeting similarly-minded, friendly people," he says. "Now I'm hooked!"



## Armchair travels with David Mitchell

In our 'armchair travel' series, VVE members share their amazing adventures to inspire others once we can travel again.

David Mitchell says the most memorable place he's been to is Disneyland. In 1973 when his daughters were young, they visited during a trip to Los Angeles and "that's when my family's love affair with all things Disney began," he says.

Apart from stopovers en route to the UK, David and family have had three longer trips to their favourite holiday spot, including the last visit in December 2018. "On this particular trip, we were able to enjoy our traditional family Christmas at home and still experience a Disney Christmas at Anaheim."

David says highlights included: the fact that his pacemaker allowed him, (and his "carers") to get fast passes on all the Disneyland rides; the unbelievable New Year's Eve firework display; and "the gingerbread-scented snow drifting down on our heads afterwards".

The Embassy Suites with free breakfast and Happy Hour were also a highlight, as was Air New Zealand's 'special assistance'. "This enabled us to bypass the security and immigration queues at both airports - and what's more, it was free," says David. "I would certainly recommend it to other seniors travelling."



# Getting around without the hassles

Driving Miss Daisy partnered last year with Virtual Village East to help members stay connected to our community and maintain their independence. One of our 'Daisies' describes a week in the life of a client:

**Tuesdays** – we drop our client at the supermarket, collect her an hour later, then help carry the shopping into the house.

**Wednesdays** – we drop her at Howick Village or Botany Town Centre for shopping and a coffee or lunch catch-up with friends.

**Thursdays** – we drive her to her weekly hairdresser appointment.

**Fridays** – a trip to Half Moon Bay for a cup of tea with friends and a walk.

**Saturdays** – we go to a bigger supermarket, then take her into Howick Village for a walk.

**Sundays** – sometimes we drive her to a family member's house for lunch or dinner.

That might seem like a lot of Daisy rides, but when this client added up the cost of maintaining a car, she realised the money from selling her car will provide her with many, many years of travel. She has a Total Mobility card so Auckland Transport pays for 50% of the cost.

## Try it for yourself:

simply call your local 'Daisies'

**Janita** (Botany 021 174 9999),

**Brenda** (Howick/Bucklands Beach 021 410 476)

**Anne** (Pakuranga 027 472 9921)

## Events coming up...

### › Monthly Coffee & Catch-up

*Tuesday 30 March*

- 10.30am to 12.30pm
- Te Tuhi, 13 Reeves Road, Pakuranga

### › Technology workshop – how to use Apps

*Thursday 22 April*

- 10.30am to 12.30pm
- HBH Senior Living,  
139 Union Road, Howick

### › Monthly Coffee & Catch-up

*Tuesday 27 April*

- 10.30am to 12.30pm
- Te Tuhi, 13 Reeves Road, Pakuranga

### › Simple Winter Dishes

*Wednesday 5 May to 19 May*

- 10am to 11.30am
- All Saints Church,  
7 Selwyn Road, Howick

### › Auckland Writers Festival

*11–16 May*

- 9am to 3.30pm
- Departing from HBH Senior Living,  
139 Union Road, Howick

### › Technology troubleshooting with St Kents students

*Thursday 13 & 27 May*

- 4pm to 4.30pm
- HBH Senior Living,  
139 Union Road, Howick

### › Monthly Coffee & Catch-up

*Tuesday 25 May*

- 10.30am to 12.30pm
- Te Tuhi, 13 Reeves Road, Pakuranga

### › Technology troubleshooting with St Kents students

*Thursday 10 & 24 June*

- 4.00pm to 4.30pm
- HBH Senior Living,  
139 Union Road, Howick

To reserve your place please call Lee on 09 538 0827  
or email [co-ordinator@virtual-village-east.org.nz](mailto:co-ordinator@virtual-village-east.org.nz)

