

## Summary – Elderly Survey

Of the 672 surveys mailed, 273 were returned, 41.3%. A scattering of others were returned after the April 1 deadline but were not included in the total. There was a broad representation of ages. Several reporting to be in their seventies were still working full time.

Many owned smart phones (79.8%) and most used apps (59.6%). Almost as many owned computers (65.5%). Emails were in use by many (78.3%) while slightly more than half (51.25%) had social media connections.

Surprisingly, 62.7% had no opinion regarding activities offered to seniors in town. The types of suggested activities were varied with many expressing a need for something in town.

Of those who responded (130), 78.4% went to out of town senior centers. What was unexpected was where they went including Plainfield, Griswold, Madison, Norwich, North Stonington, Stonington, Bristol, East Lyme, Groton, Lisbon, and Coventry RI.

When asked if there was interest in educational opportunities, “maybes” held sway (45.5%). There is an opportunity here to create or offer activities for seniors, perhaps in partnership with the school. Perhaps along the line of one-hour workshops (4:00/4:30 to 5:00/5:30) after which some attendees might go out for a light supper.

The town website, newsletters and signs take the top three spots as sources of information. The Friends newsletter and library complete the top five. If these were expanded and improved upon, could they be no- or low-cost options to get out more information? Facebook’s Dwelling in Voluntown was also seen as a potential source.

Transportation showed several surprises. Most respondents still drive (91.7%) and enjoy reliable transportation, even into their eighties! Unfortunately, at this time Dial a Ride (60.9%) and a senior van (58.6) received resounding “nos” for use.

Meal and food options leaned heavily towards cooking themselves or using restaurants/takeout. Surprisingly once again, only four people used Meals on Wheels and several commented that they didn’t know it was available in town.

Responses to the question of whether they would like to see a senior center town, Yes (45.6%) and Maybe (46%) were all but tied. There were only twenty No answers.

Discounts were used by relatively few and mostly at local vendors. Many were not aware of any discounts.

The comments section was used vastly. Some caused chuckles and some didn’t relate to the survey but there were several nuggets that could be considered no- or low-cost. Examples include: A way to vote/watch budget and public meetings online; senior tax discount (5%?); a booth for senior information/ideas at the farmers market; a list of teenagers to help with snow shoveling and cleaning off cars; information via mail; newsletter in the mail; I would walk more if there were more places to stop and rest; free beach passes for seniors.



February 27 mailed 672 surveys in 459 envelopes.

March 6 – 86 envelopes returned; 6 unable to forward with 6 surveys; remailed 1. Total of 118 surveys returned. 17.7%

March 11 – 47 envelopes returned with 66 surveys; 2 doubled up; 1 blank. 27.7%

March 17 – 37 envelopes returned with 44 surveys; 1 did not fill out front. 34.3%

March 20 – 14 envelopes returned with 21 surveys

March 29 – 10 envelopes returned with 16 surveys

April 3 – 4 envelopes returned with 6 surveys

Total returns: 273 for 41.3%

<b>Age ranges:</b>	60-65	71	26%
	66-70	55	20.1%
	71-75	69	25.2%
	76-80	32	11.7%
	81-85	25	9.1%
	86+	21	8/6%

**Technology:**

Smart phone	218	79.8%
Use apps	130	59.6%
Have landline or landline only	63	23%
Have computer	179	65.5%
Have email	214	78.3%
Have iPad	121	44.3%
Have social media connection	140	51.2%

**Comments:**

I'm taking lessons now at Otis Library Norwich.; Phone is normally turned off-only used for emergencies.; Smart phones are dumbing down America big time.; 1 smart phone, 1 not smart phone; wife does; Don't know what this means. (*pertaining to application software*); simple cell phone, just a cell phone

**Current services satisfaction:**

Satisfied	31	12.5%
Somewhat satisfied	13	5.2%
No opinion	155	62.7%
Not very satisfied.	30	12.1%
Unsatisfied	19	7.2%

Types of activities: A gathering space for socializing, bus trips; social events, walking group, exercise program; day room made available in new (Bldg); free parking pass for seniors at Finn Beach; our own senior center where seniors can meet daily, weekly, etc. to share lunch hour, crafts and games. We can actually use a paid coordinator; welding classes; rides, help around house; ? Whatever the town could "muster up" would probably be good for most people; As a newly minted 60 year old I'm new to the game; games – board or card, trips (within 100 mile radius); senior center open daily; transportation to senior events. Flyers advertising events; swimming; educational activities, trips to local museums, art classes, guest speakers, activities on weekends (I still work); I believe a senior should entertain himself; I have no idea what is offered; ping pong, pickleball, arts and crafts, woodworking, connection with Social Security, meals at a low cost for those who need it; None for me – I am NEVER lacking of things to do; Day or weekend trips to regional attractions; I wasn't aware that there is activities/entertainment available in town for seniors; trips, exercise classes, lunch outings, etc.; Don't know what the activities and entertainment are??; I own a business and work fulltime still. When I retire, I'll be more interested and have more information; group day trips, group movie day, puzzle day, pot luck lunches; not sure; afternoon-late afternoon concerts; cards-social gatherings; concerts on the green in warm weather; outside entertainment in the nice weather; I've never been involved with Voluntown seniors; dirt bike races; different inexpensive trips/ health info/activities for the mind/ exercise groups; no opinion; Maybe join in with Griswold senior citizen group; computer knowledge, transportation to local events; daytime yoga classes; daytime exercise classes; regularly scheduled breakfast firehouse monthly. I am not aware of town activities for seniors; Van/bus to Lisbon Landing (multiple stops), scheduled drop off/pickup; trips, hikes, bowling; various trips, luncheons at restaurants; exercise classes, Zoomba, etc.; anything; anything; senior center; senior center; bus trips; more bus trips; music, history of Voluntown, things people collect, things found in Pachaug; yoga, tai chi, day trips; coffee club one morning per week; never really thought about it!; not sure; IDK; bus/meals (as was proposed by seniors organization); road races, outdoor music and dance; indoor heated pool like Plainfield; heated indoor pool; senior center; none; I don't know what's available at this time so I can't answer this; educational on using iPhones, smart phones, making appointments to DMV, classes on planting plants, birds, etc.; line dancing; unaware of any; I am unaware of any. I moved here 5 years ago; exercise, aerobics, yoga; Honestly, don't know at this time but I don't think there is much being offered. I could be wrong. Maybe not enough advertisement?; dancing; Don't use any; yoga; bingo, yoga, sewing, gardening; I don't know what Voluntown offers; Some type of exercise and tech classes; Don't know what's available; senior meeting place, trips, outdoor activities; no comment; board walks thru the forests, music; exercise classes; bingo, cards, day trips to different restaurant or activity like Mystic Aquarium; bingo, cards, games, outings such

as restaurants for lunch, or trips to movies or the aquarium or area attractions; senior center; yoga; doctor or shopping transport for those needing it; card games, board games, etc.; maybe the Dwelling Facebook could post things happening for seniors. Concerts, craft night; more activity for seniors; picnics at the pavilion; wi-fi internet, day trips, computer classes; more trips; meals, speakers, games; social oriented environments, meals, speakers; meals, games, activities, readings; bingo, dancing; organized senior center; unaware of events; I am not aware of any entertainment or activities in town; music, nature hikes, crafts; senior center; trips; movies at firehouse; tai chi; not interested at this time; ping pong, bingo, like activities during the day; small gardens in small spaces, quilting; festivals at the green; summer outdoor movies and bingo; pitch tournaments; exercise, craft, informational; day trips, grocery shopping, regular shopping, lunch; movies, exercise programs, healthy eating programs; easy exercise for elderly with arthritis; exercise groups, programs in evenings for people who still work; I need to join our town's senior group; I need to join our town's senior group

senior center, transportation, flyers, speakers, museums, bingo, senior programs, yoga, exercise, gathering space, breakfast, social, walking, hikes, bowling, day room, lunch, town senior center, anything, music, history, tai chi, rides, bus, meals, road races, games, hobbies, technology, outdoor, more activities, arts and crafts, connect with Social Security, restaurant trips, Mystic Aquarium, movies, health, foot doctor, affordable trips, lectures, concerts, organized senior center, not sure, unaware of events, movies at firehouse, readings, puzzles, pot lucks, cards, picnics, wifi, computer, social oriented environment

Comments: not aware, don't know, no idea

**Participate in out-of-town activities:**

Yes	102	78.4%	No	28	21.5%
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Where: church, Plainfield, Griswold/Jewett City, Madison, Norwich, North Stonington, Stonington, Bristol, East Lyme, Groton, Coventry (RI), Lisbon

Types of activities: trips, pool, food banks, volunteering, outdoor, dancing, Big E, glee club, foot clinic, exercise, pickleball, lunches at the senior center

How they find out: online, emails, newsletter, word of mouth, town hall, FaceBook, family, handouts, social media, personal phone, friends, donate, newspaper, internet, website, meeting, visit center

Comments:



**Educational opportunities:**

Yes 61 23.1% No 77 29.2% Maybe 125 45.5%

Types: crafts

Comments: The waiver of fees at community college and state universities for residents over 62 should be emphasized on town's website.

But not for me. I would like to educate others on what we must do to restore everything that has been destroyed here.

Neither of the other senior centers require masks or vaccines. We feel pretty left out of Voluntown senior events, due to vax requirement.

Information sources:

#1 Town website	104	#5 Library	41
#2 Town newsletters	96	#6 Other	26
#3 Town signs	95	#7 Town Hall Boards	23
#4 Friends newsletter	63	#8 Elderly housing	4

Other: FaceBook, Dwelling in Voluntown, senior meetings, other seniors, relatives, friends, personal phone call, none, radio, computer, word of mouth, wife

Comments: didn't know there was one, didn't know any available, none, don't know of any, Voluntown Baptist Church

**Transportation**

Still drive:	Yes	245	91.7%	No	22	8.2%
Reliable transportation:	Yes	246	98%	No	5	1.9%
Rely on others:	Yes	33	13.3%	No	214	86.6%

Would/have you use(d):

Dial a ride	Yes	33	13.8%	No	145	60.9%	Maybe	60	25.2%
Senior van	Yes	32	14.8%	No	126	58.6%	Maybe	57	26.5%

Comments: would use when not well, did not know about; for Dr. appt., didn't know it was available. Would pay for ride.





**Meal/food sources:**

- #1 Cook meals 214
- #2 Local restaurants 160
- #3 Out of town restaurants 152
- #4 Takeout 101
- #5 Restaurant apps 22
- #6 Grocery apps 20
- #7 Other 8
- #8 Meals on Wheels 4

Other: Grange, Foxwoods, Amazon, shop with friends

Comments: never knew about Meals on Wheels, Griswold senior center, Mom's Meals, dancing, family

**Would you like to see a town senior center:**

Yes 109 45.6% No 20 8.3% Maybe 110 46%

Comments: already exists; what would happen there?; where?, in place of the shed,

**Discounts**

Aware of senior discounts: Yes 55 No 120  
Use senior discounts: Yes 29 No 61

Types used: Better Valu, oil, shopping, meals, Town & Country oil, AARP, restaurants, ask, travel, veterinarian, entertainment, hotel, movies, groceries, travel 10-20 miles, Lowes, Home Depot, AAA, Pachaug Outdoor Club, newspapers, Coventry (RI) senior center, area stores, aquarium, Pequot Center, veterans discount, TVCCA, food stamps, may use if available, discount oil, discount on oil purchase, senior shopping days, senior discounts at Better Valu, discounts on restaurant food, some store run discounts, I always ask each business I use if they have senior discounts. You would be surprised how many do. You have to ask though., shopping, travel, entertainment, there is only the veterinarian in Voluntown that offers a discount for seniors, Better Valu shopping senior discount, discounts and stores and businesses, pharmaceutical discounts to low income people, market foods discounts and living a frugal lifestyle. Buying what you need not want., AARP, AAA coupons, Mystic Aquarium, Pequot Center, veterans discounts, meals when/where available, AARP hotel discounts, movies, etc., grocery stores, shovel and drive, AARP, Better Valu, Griswold Senior Center, don't know of any, You have to travel 10 to 20 miles for a senior discount around here., senior real estate discount, newspaper, area stores, Town & Country offers a discount, when offered

**Comment section (with responses):**

If even one gas station in town had a gas aisle for "Disabled & Seniors Only" that was "full service". It is almost impossible to get someone's attention that you need help to pump gas and are disabled. Honking your horn does not work! Thank You!

Although I am early 60's and still working full-time, I do think increasing senior services would be important. I do not currently need or use any senior services.

Maybe a movie at the fire station hall; I was in their [sic] for the first time for my COVID shot and was impressed how big and nice it was. Also very clean. Sincerely Kathy Kudells. *(Movies have been shown but the seating is uncomfortable.)*

I had no idea of the meeting and with no insurance any services would be appreciated. God Bless you all for your hard work—Emily Allard does a great job and I love the library—Thank you—any programs are appreciated considering there is nothing to do in this town.

PARTY GIRLS AND free Booze for men over 70 *(There's one in every crowd.)*

Assistance with taxes (free) A way to vote/watch budget meetings from home. A way to watch public meetings online such as the recreational area that's being planned.

Reliable Transportation for medical appointments.

Did not know your commission existed a monthly new letter would be nice a senior center would be nice  
Byron Gallup 3/11/23

Have the homeowners of the houses that are empty and falling apart either repair them or tear them down. Church Street is a perfect example.

Maybe some financial aid towards our high electric bills. If your income is below a certain amount you can qualify. *(Apparently does not know about energy assistance.)*

I would walk more if there were more places to stop and rest.

Senior Tax Discount *(Ask me about my 5% idea.)*

As far as I know you are all doing a good job thanks.

I think it would be a good idea to have a list of other senior citizens who would be willing to sit with my spouse when I am in a doctor's appointment (sit in the waiting room while I am being seen) or to drive my car with me and spouse if I needed surgery. I would be willing to help others with the same problem.  
Peggy Morningstar

What would be nice a senior bus that would take and pick us up at least 2 days a week. To go to Wal-marts or Dollar General, Better Value. I am sure there are other places to go to. That's all I can think of right. Thank you for this letter. Maybe out of town bus trips once in a while. Samuel A Burton

Thank you!

Voluntown needs more resources for Seniors who can't leave their homes.

Add booth for senior information/ideas at the Summer Farmers Market. Join other local senior center activities.

I would like information on all of these services listed above. Virginia Martin, 3 Rachel Lane,  
[ginnyinct@yahoo.com](mailto:ginnyinct@yahoo.com)

Wife says "I had just started going to monthly senior meetings pre-covid. When they resumed after, they required masks and proof of vaccination. After some time, members at the meetings (who were only allowed if vaccinated) voted to keep the vaccine requirement. That didn't seem like a fair vote, as unvaccinated seniors were not allowed to vote. Sometime after that, I stopped receiving the senior email newsletter. Senior services in town should be available to ALL seniors. Is the town senior group allowed to mandate vaccine req? *(Sounds like this all happened with the previous president. Current president does not use computer, hence no newsletter. Voting issue, I can't speak to.)*

Work with the Voluntown Library and other towns to offer seniors programs, events, trip.

Refer to the other enclosed questionnaire. My husband said it best Anne T. Haveles

A list of teenagers to help with snow shoveling and cleaning off cars with unmanageable snow amounts.

Recently had approx. 7" of snow—it was heavy snow. We do have a plow guy for our long driveway, but cleaning off the back deck and cars is becoming difficult. Perhaps a list of some young folks that would be reliable to call for assistance? Of course, we would pay them.

I am currently paying close to \$300 a month for "basic" cable, a landline and wifi. It would be nice to have a source that could help me find something more affordable that meets my needs. *(Comcast has a senior assistance program.)*

Thanks for asking. I go to meetings in several towns. Historical Societies, libraries, talks. Just went to a talk on toy banks in East Lyme at their senior center—very good.

I am currently (and hopefully for the foreseeable future) self-sufficient. This I have no need for such services. I applaud your efforts on behalf of those who need such programs!!! Kudos for a well-prepared questionnaire. Whatever services you provide please keep the impact to the taxpayers as low as possible!!! T.C. Haveles *(Aw, shucks)*

I never get lonely and will never run out of things to do. I have no need for a senior center. But I do get that some people would want and use one.

All of the above. Bristol is a city of 67,000, Voluntown is 2,500. I think the elementary school gym could be used for ping pong, pickle ball, etc. Winter can be difficult for some of our seniors (not for me) and helping with meals could be a big issue for some. Simple medical exam and nutritional info will help, like ear wax, cutting toenails, have a volunteer dentist to clean teeth. Just to have some of our seniors get together will make a difference in their lives.

It would be nice to have a newsletter sent to me as I don't read emails and don't spend any time on my phone or computer. I'm very interested in having a Senior Center in Voluntown. A place to meet and stay in touch with other residents.

Necessary transportation for seniors who have no transportation. Information via mail (not everyone has a computer). Keeping taxes as low as possible so we can stay in our homes. (*Ageing in place is the goal for more and more for seniors.*)

Would like help with oil if we qualify and would like to know what's available. (*May not know about energy assistance.*)

We have been here 2 ½ years—at the onset of COVID. So I guess we missed a lot of info during that time of shutdown, etc.

Senior center handicapped accessible. Fire House handicapped accessible for emergency.

Having been a member and chairman for many years, and knowing that some of the members I knew are still there, I'm sure they are doing a good job. "Notes" Hey you guys. (Miss You)

I wish the town had an actual recreation center folks could go to, but doesn't seem possible for this small town.

We need services for the elderly in Voluntown. A place to go and meet others. A place to feel connected in our rural little town. I would like to see transportation services offered and a senior center with meals offered. I would like to see an area of information for seniors to know what services are available to them, where they or family members could get information on home services (transportation, health care, meals, day care, financial help, etc.)

Need information on Meals on Wheels.

#### Thank You

Rides to different events at low or no cost. Some of us seniors are lucky to have \$5.00 at the end of the month. Please keep me informed. Linda Dodson, 16 Tanglewood Lane

The Town Newsletter needs a good proofreader. Many items are outdated or inaccurate. I have questioned newsletter items and have NEVER received a response.

I would like to see an area set aside for senior use and run by a town-assigned person 1:00-4:00 p.m. preferably every day or perhaps 3 afternoons per week. Ann C. Brendle

I would like to see activities that reduce cognitive decline, maintain physical fitness, support independence and decrease social isolation. These may include educational classes, exercise, yoga, sports, clubs such as chess, pitch, scrabble, coffee hours, tai chi, chorus, computer support, field trips, outreach, counseling services, medical support for podiatry, blood pressure checks, ear wax cleaning, strength and balance improvement classes

You might want to consider a name change to the commission. This isn't about being PC, but with a name of elderly it implies infirm. Perhaps something along the lines of Commission on Senior Affairs. (ooo...I like that)

We certainly could use something for people. We have bought meals at the Grange on Ekonk Hill, but avoid crowds, so we bring home takeout from crowded places to avoid communicable diseases. We have "vaxed" but still are cautious.

Use at least a 12 font the next time you send something out. *(I checked, it's 11 point font used to fit the survey on two pages.)*

Not if it raises our taxes.

Lower senior property taxes.

Have a way for older residents to get help when needed. For example, answer questions on wills, living wills, etc. How to get to doctors, supermarkets, anywhere if suddenly can't drive. Provide resources so elderly can stay in their homes if they have physical or mental health or financial problems. *(Checked and this person said "no" to Dial-a-Ride and senior van.)*

As noted above, our own Senior Center with activities. Our own paid coordinator. Lisbon and Griswold have both and have a wonderful turnout. Living in Voluntown all these years I do not expect the above to ever happen. *(Ouch!)*

Taxes on autos should be gone! If Rhode Island can do it so can Connecticut.

Would be great to get a newsletter in the mail to let seniors know what is available to them and how to take advantage of them.

We need a new building (town hall). The one we have does not say welcome to Voluntown, a Wonderful Place to Live and Conduct Business. The great team we have working for us should also have a great place to work. *(My opinion.)* R. Frozzo

Health screenings, money management for seniors, elder drivers' education, home safety, neighborhood crime watch.

No opposed to special services for seniors but have no need of them currently.

Rural seniors tend to be isolated. A meeting place for activities, meetings, etc., would give people a place to meet and socialize as well as have a place to get information on local events or services that may be available.

Voluntown is a desert for seniors. Many seniors have been active in town organizations but once inactive they seem to be forgotten. We live long, have better health, are better educated and are better off financially than our parents were. Handicapped accessibility is also overlooked in town.

I'm still working but trying to figure cost of retiring. Went to Norwich center but couldn't get help there (not from Norwich) but I got this info [enclosed sheet] from a (?) office in the industrial park. I still don't know what meds would cost or anything like part B etc. any help like that would help. I'll try and make it to a meeting. Thank You Very Much!! Mark A. Leikowski, 53 Bennet Circle

