

Warwickshire Forum Digest

Issue 10
September 2007

WARWICKSHIRE OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM

EDITORIAL



The Warwickshire Forum Digest fulfils an important and far-reaching role throughout the County. Its role is to inform, to unite and to encourage. It gives news of what is going on at all the different Forums (and SCANS and CORE) in Warwickshire, keeps them in touch with one another and

aware of what they are doing. The Older People's Services Partnership Board, in consultation with older people, is working out the Strategy for Older People, and the Digest reports each step of how the Strategy is being implemented.

Each Forum is autonomous, and so operates in its individual ways. Although they often have the same speaker, it can be seen from the Reports that different aspects are highlighted in each case. The Forums are also campaigners – we don't give up in our efforts to make things better when a need has been identified. Look, for example, at the Alcester SCAN's efforts with regard to their community hospital; at Henley SCAN's attempts to improve access at their railway station; and at the work of the Warwick Senior People's Forum Transport Group. Gradually the voice of the Older Person is being listened to – and it is being realised that what we have to say is worth hearing.

Joan Draper, Editor

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the second issue of our Digest for 2007. It does not seem possible that it is this time already, and each one shows that all forums are busier than ever. Planning of the Annual Event this year is going well and will be held at a different venue – the Holiday Inn at Ryton. It will have a slightly different slant on the morning session and I am sure this will work well. The Forum members will participate more in the morning session when we put forward questions to be answered by the 'Expert Panel'. Then we will enjoy the afternoon activities.

The Representatives on the Partnership Board are very active. An Away Day was held in May and we are having a meeting in September to hear how our suggestions are to be put in place. However, lack of funding means that not everything is achievable. The good news is that Dorothy Goodwin is to become Vice Chair of the Board until the end of the year, and will take over the Chair in the New Year on your behalf. I wish her well.

The Warwickshire Older People's Forums continue to be very informative. Everyone is busier than ever, and we have a good representation from all our Forums and SCANS at our monthly meetings. Speakers at these

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meetings include Elizabeth Phillips of Age Concern Warwickshire on Age Discrimination; Graeme Betts, Strategic Director of Adult Health and Community Services on the relationship between the WOPF and the Partnership Board; Nick Gower-Johnson on Local Area Agreements (something we should all get involved with); and Laura Vesty and Caroline Faulkner on Warwickshire Waste Management and Recycling. At each of these sessions there was a lively debate.



I do hope that all Forum members are beginning to feel that more notice is being taken of us. Things have started to improve but there is still work to be done to enable us to get results. We should remember we have a lot of knowledge to give, and as older people we are the ones who know what we want – mostly our independence.

Brenda Hardy, Chair

Warwickshire Older People's Forum
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FORUM NEWS

RUGBY CORE – COUNSEL OF OLDER RESIDENTS

Since our last report we have been very busy. In April we held an Open Day, sixty older people attended. Many different nationalities took part and we had eight stands, which were manned by different organisations and supplied a wealth of knowledge. We had workshops – they were the Pension Service, Direct Payments, PHILLIS service and CORE. The older people attended all four and the feedback was excellent. Since the Event we have increased our number of members.



We continue to have lively monthly meetings, and have a speaker to each one. In May Eva Aldridge, the Volunteer Centre Manager, talked about Community Transport. There are mini buses that can be hired with a driver to enable small groups of people to visit places of their choice.

In June we had Ester Higden from The Primary Care Team. She gave an outline of her job, and then members asked her questions. One was “Why are we losing our P.A.L.S worker?”

Tina Avis, our ex Mayor, talked about her year as Mayor, which was very interesting.

In August Laura Vesty and Caroline Faulkner told us about saving waste and recycling. This proved a very lively debate.

Quite often professional people ask to attend our Forum meetings to gain information from us. Sometimes we find this difficult due to having very busy meetings.

I am pleased that some of our members are involved with other meetings that are held, not only in Rugby. They are prepared to travel to keep our Forum involved, such as Valuing Age & Experience, as Management Team members, that are held in Birmingham.

Brenda Hardy, Chair

Rugby CORE

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM



We are continuing to have a good number of attendees at each meeting. We would like to increase our membership, and we do offer a buffet lunch at a small charge.

In recent months we have had a talk from Alison Hallam on Road Safety. Alison listens to the concerns of members about different motoring and pavement problems, for instance the increase of motorised scooters and the behaviour of some of the users. On the same day we had Lisa Flintham, one of our Police Community Support Officers, telling us about her role and how we can help in stopping crime in our neighbourhood.

A group of our members visited Bede Village to see what housing and care services they have to offer, in a community setting. The chef there cooks a very good meal, which was enjoyed by those visiting. We give thanks to Geraldine, the Manager for showing us around.

We have been lucky in Nuneaton to have a Community Café, which is run by Guideposts

Support for Carers. Desiree Lambert, their Manager, gave us a very good talk about their work with carers. The café is worth a visit if you come to Nuneaton.

We have been updated on the new laws for Power of Attorney and Enduring Power of Attorney, which comes into force on October 1st 2007.

A visit from the PHILLIS team, which we are all now familiar with, gave us an opportunity to express what services we felt are lacking.

This has all helped us in our discussions on the six priorities to help the commissioning process for development of future services in Warwickshire for older people. We will take our points to the forthcoming Annual Event in November, for which we have no shortage of delegates wanting to attend.

On our own Forum future plans are a Road Show of Services, entitled 'Better Living for Today', 21st February 2008 at the Civic Hall Bedworth. Plans are well under way with a lot of interest for displays, stands and presentations.

Dorothy Goodwin

Vice Chair and Speaker Co-ordinator
Nuneaton and Bedworth Older People's Forum

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM



Since the last Digest we have added a few more members to our Forum, and had several different speakers, and at every meeting Margaret Smith has been on hand to give an update on the Older People's Partnership Board.

In April, Bob Trahern from the Borough Council gave us an insight on what the One Stop Shop in the Council Offices would be like. Then Paul Sharratt and Zoe Evans gave a very interesting presentation on recycling. They told us that we have to reduce household waste by 75% by the year 2010. They also told us how the different materials are recycled. As there are 110 types, if plastic were recycled it would add around £6 to the council tax bill.

The June meeting was attended by two speakers, Sheila Hinds from Pensions and Roger Fyldes from the Police. I think that Sheila had a number of requests for benefit consultations as a result of this

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presentation. Roger has worked locally in the Police Force for twenty years. He gave advice on parking and also said that crime figures have gone down in the area.

Our August meeting was an all day meeting, with lunch. Over 60 people were present, which is currently the usual attendance. In the morning Amanda and Jane came to explain about this year's annual event. After lunch we had Geraldine Reynolds to tell us about Bede Village. This is a complex, which has everything from houses and flats to nursing home facilities.

Several of our members have had a visit to the Aldi Depot on the industrial estate to see at first hand how the business operates.


A representative of the Air Ambulance will be coming to our October meeting, and we are now planning our big event on 11th April, which will be all day at Atherstone Memorial Hall.

Iris Filmer, Chair

North Warwickshire

Older People's Forum

THE SENIOR PEOPLE'S FORUM OF WARWICK DISTRICT



At our Annual General Meeting in June we lost all the officers of our management committee because they were time-expired, so we now have an entirely new structure. Joan Draper is our new Chair, Jean Ball is Vice Chair and I am the new Hon Sec. Our membership secretary has been replaced by Jeannie Stewart, and Marion Grimwood is back on the Management Committee – she is leader of the Health Group.

In 2003 I started to climb the ladder of helping to bring a change to people in care homes. I learned how to perform the exercise programme, which I still do. As Hon Sec of the SPF I hope to change things slightly – we are far too serious. When we have a coffee morning I put on funny hats and meet and greet everyone at the door. Some people like this, but some do not. It is hard to please everyone.

We have had some good speakers this year. In March, Betty Barnett gave us a talk on The Last Century in Retrospect, accompanied by tapes of music of the decades, which everyone enjoyed. We had a coffee morning in April, and in May Denise Dewis came to explain to us the intricacies of PHILLIS. At our AGM in June, Annabel Matthews addressed us on Road Safety for older people, and in July Pam Collett gave an interesting demonstration and talk on Aids for the Less Able.

We are fortunately lucky to have three ladies who volunteer to make tea and coffee at our general meetings. Thank you to them from everyone.

Alan Goldstraw

Warwick District Senior People's Forum

WARWICK DISTRICT SPF - TRANSPORT GROUP

Ken Hope, who has chaired this group since the inauguration of the Forum, retired as from our AGM in June. He worked tirelessly on our behalf and his legacy is a group, which has made its reputation beyond the Forum itself. The group was praised at a meeting earlier this year by a guest speaker from the County Council as being 'light years ahead of other organisations' in its work of bringing together local authorities transport operators and our members. The excellent working relationship that has been built up means that we can regularly invite speakers to our meetings for mutual exchange of news and views. Thanks again to Ken.

In taking over the chair from Ken, I find myself with a willing group of transport users. George Watson scrutinises timetables and services in minute detail for his reports; Peter Moore has connections in railway circles; all of us have our bus passes and use them regularly. We had no meeting in August – we went to Chipping Campden for lunch instead!

I have sat on the Project Board planning the new bus interchange at Warwick. Public consultation took place in April and 55 points arising from this were discussed last week by the Board. Subject to planning permission being given, archaeological surveys made and funding being available, work will begin next June, with completion three months later. When built, the bus station will be a fixture on what is now a car park: the Mop Fair will disrupt bus routes for the last time in October this year!

The new 'decriminalised' parking schemes have hit our streets in the last weeks. It is too soon to see a consensus but fine-tuning is obviously necessary. Personally, I just hope that a few people at least will be converted into bus users.

Margaret Ellis, Chair

Warwick Senior People's Forum
Transport Group

WARWICK DISTRICT SPF - HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE GROUP



THE NHS CARE RECORDS DATA BASE

In 2009 a computer database will store everyone's' medical records. GP surgeries, pharmacies, walk in centres will be able to have access to your medical information. This is to improve the safety and quality of patient care. At present information comes into your records, by letter, email, fax or phone. The new system will allow access in a safe and secure way. The change will take place over several years and will bring a number of improvements.

WHAT WILL CHANGE WITH THE NEW SERVICE?

You will have a SUMMARY CARE RECORD, which will be available to people, ANYWHERE IN ENGLAND. At first your record card will contain basic information such as details of allergies, current prescriptions, and bad reactions to medicines. After that, each time you use any NHS health services, details about any current health problems may be added to your Summary Care Record.

The NHS will begin to create Summary Care Records from 2007. It will take several years. You will be told by your Primary Care Trust or GP surgery before your Record is ready so you have time to consider your options. If you want to put limits on access to your information, you will have time to do so.

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DETAILED RECORDS

You will also have detailed records. NHS organisations, which normally work together in a local area, such as hospitals, clinics and GPs, are gradually being linked electronically. So instead of having separate records in different places, staff caring for you will have access to the information they need. The NHS will tell you when this happens.

WHO WILL SEE MY RECORDS?

Unless you choose to limit the information that can be seen, health care professionals treating you across England will be able to see your Summary Care Records if necessary.

CONFIDENTIALITY

By law everyone working for or on behalf of the NHS must keep all information about you secure. In every place where you are treated by the NHS, there are people responsible for protecting your confidentiality. These people are often known as Caldicott Guardians. The NHS publishes a Care Record Guarantee for England. This says how the NHS will collect, store, and allow access to your electronic records. These measures make sure that your information is stored safely, stays private, and can only be seen by the appropriate people.

HOW WILL ACCESS TO MY RECORDS BE CONTROLLED?

Anyone who gets access to your records:

- must be involved in your care;
- must have a smartcard, protected by a chip and pass code;
- can only see information appropriate to their role (for example, a receptionist may only see the information needed to process your appointment, not your full clinical records);
- will automatically have their details recorded – who they are and what they did. You can ask to see this.

WILL YOU HAVE ACCESS TO YOUR ELECTRONIC RECORDS?

Yes.

Your Primary Care Trust or GP will write to tell you that the Summary Care Record is coming to your area. Once you have been contacted your Record will automatically become part of the new NHS Care Record Service unless you object. If you are happy about this, you do not need to do anything.

At the moment Bolton, Bury, Dorset and Birmingham PCTs are trialling the NHS Care Record Service, which will be evaluated before it is rolled out across the country.

Marion Grimwood, RGN CMH.

Retired Lecturer in Health and Social Care.
Warwick Senior People's Forum
Health and Social Care Group

SCAN

SENIOR CITIZENS ACTION NETWORK

ALCESTER SCAN

Alcester Community Hospital.

While awaiting the outcome of the review and future plans for upgrading Alcester health facilities, promised for October, SCAN's long relationship with the hospital continues with representation on their own review group looking at the Future Alcester Community Health Service.

More Choice

At our July meeting Lesley Kendall, the County Development Officer for Direct Payments, explained how they increase the range of options to support independent living. These are cash payments instead of services such as home-care, etc. This allows people who have been assessed for services to choose to arrange and pay for care themselves. Stress of understanding and management is removed with a support service - 'The Rowan Organisation' – on hand.

Rubbish!

Faced with a bench covered with rubbish provided by members – Rob Weeks, Head of Environment at Stratford District Council, brought us the real picture on local rubbish and recycling. Bad news – is that currently each local household sends twice the national average of black bags to landfill. Good News. This year 41% more rubbish had been recycled. Rob also dispelled rumours about collection cycles and chips on bins.

Dzien dobry ...

Chris Mitchell from Stratford District Council outlined the background to the influx of Polish workers into the area, explaining that a recent survey shows their presence brings many benefits into Alcester, including an enticing selection of foods!

The Deluge

On the night of Friday 20 July the deluge brought floods to our area.

BIDFORD ON AVON SCAN



It has been a varied and interesting summer for the members of Bidford SCAN. There has not been any spectacular high point, yet all the meetings have had instructive and useful individual elements to them, which make them valuable.

Sian Sansum, PHILLIS broker for the area, proved an attractive and enthusiastic curtain-raiser for the season, talking engagingly about her work, and arousing much interest in what PHILLIS can do. The fact that as a small girl she used to come trampolining in the hall after school also pleased members greatly, and the ensuing discussion was more than usually animated.

Councillor Gill Roache, Older People's Champion of Stratford District, gave us an outline of her multifarious roles as portfolio holder on the council, for Housing and Finance as well as Older People.

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In a short time she has significantly raised her profile in the district, and her experience as a teacher makes it easy for her to listen and talk to people, making her always a welcome guest.

The May meeting included a “Back to Basics” course in Road Safety for older people, given by Alison Hallam from the County Council. In the wake of some quite hair-raising accidents experienced by members of other Older People’s Forums, this was a timely reminder of the latent dangers facing even cautious road and pavement users.

In July, members were entertained with a new film from Lesley Kendall, illustrating what can be done by elderly or disabled people with direct benefit payments, enabling them to select their own carers; the support they give; the time they come and for how long; and how to hire (and possibly fire) them using direct payments. If nothing more, this was very much food for thought.

Our most recent session has perhaps been the most exciting – certainly for me. The County Youth Service is doing a project in Bidford, bringing older and younger people together on an intergenerational project, the object being that the young ones interview the older ones on film, which they will edit to produce a film comparing life for young people today with life sixty years ago. As a rehearsal, SCAN members sat in a circle and gave reminiscences of their childhood and youth, and a fascinating picture of life in the 1940s and 50s emerged. Most of the strongest memories of those days come from experience during the war, the winter of 1947, or national service.

Mike Gerrard, Chair
Bidford on Avon SCAN

HENLEY IN ARDEN SCAN



We now have a full committee at Henley SCAN. Cyril Bengier is the Chair; Janet Chisholm is the Vice Chair; and the Secretary is Annette Walker.

In March Dave Matthews, the County Council’s District Transport Manager, was made aware of the problems of accessing Warwick from Henley in Arden, especially Warwick Hospital for patients and visitors.

Sian Sansum, our District PHILLIS Co-ordinator, explained the new service -Promoting Health and Independence through Low Level Integrated Support. She was keen for us to give our views on how the service best develops.

At our May meeting Rob Weeks, Head of Environment, Stratford upon Avon District Council came to inform us about rubbish and recycling. A number of members were very concerned about reports in the media about rubbish collections every two weeks in some areas of the country. We were assured that our rubbish would continue to be collected weekly. Rob also outlined the Food Hygiene Programme called “Scores on the Doors” – essential information for all who eat out. A list of every establishment involved in the preparation/selling of food in Henley was given out.

In July, Jayne Welch from the Rowan Organisation, came to speak about how the Direct Payments scheme works. If help is needed in the home, a call to Social Services is made and someone will come and assess the position. A bank account is opened by the Council specifically for this service, and the Rowan Organisation is there to assist with banking arrangements, and to advise on which agency to use.

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Henley Railway Station

Chris Mitchell reported that there was no further progress on the access at the railway station – Govia have taken over from Railtrack and although requests have been made to our MP nothing has been received to date. Daniel Coldicott is the person who is dealing with this for the WCC.

Community Links

This is working very satisfactorily for people who are stuck for transport. 750 trips per month are taken on average, and £1 is charged per journey (£2 each way). If a carer has to be in attendance they go free. The only service not available is to medical related appointments – volunteer drivers have to be used for this.

Cyril Bengier, Chair

Henley in Arden SCAN

SHIPSTON ON STOUR SCAN

Shipston SCAN have now moved their bimonthly meetings to Tuesdays in order to avoid clashes with the monthly WOPF meetings.

We were very sorry to have lost the services of Gerda Jones from Warwickshire County Council, who has been a considerable help in running our SCAN over a length period.

Our March meeting was host to Sian Sansum who explained the introduction of the PHILLIS project and distributed related leaflets.

In May Allison Hallam, Road Safety Officer of WCC spoke on road safety matters, and Councillor Gillian Roach explained how, as Older Persons' Services Portfolio Holder for Stratford District Council, she could facilitate the provision of help and advice.

Brian Tafft, Chair

Shipston on Stour SCAN

SOUTHAM & DISTRICT SCAN



Following our recent successful application to County, we are now independent and have elected a Treasurer and signatories to our newly opened Bank Account. Our subsequent interview with Amanda Burn and Jane Walkeden has helped to smooth our future path.

Over the past few months we have had a variety of speakers and subjects. April brought Mary Harris from Age Concern and Marie Rowlands from Trading Standards who updated us on services, and scams to look out for.

In June we held an `Open Meeting` to which we invited Gillian Roach – Stratford District Older People's Champion. A lively debate of question, answer and requests stimulated all concerned. At this meeting our Facilitator for the forthcoming Annual Event set out the priorities and questions required for the attendees to the Conference to debate on behalf of our SCAN. It was noted that a lot of what had gone on before seemed relevant, and a note was taken of the questions already raised.

August meeting brought two members of Southam Community Police force to address us on `Safeguarding our Property & Person` - again a very lively discussion followed. Also at the meeting

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was John Appleton, our local County Councillor, who had requested to come along and make himself, known to us – it seems our fame is spreading.

Finally, we hope to be involved in a `Road Show` in September, orchestrated by Age Concern/Help the Aged around the sheltered housing in Southam. This should give us an opportunity to engage with this group of older people.

We are also planning to leaflet all the residential/sheltered housing complexes in the area, telling them of our existence, plus putting out fliers on village notice-boards advertising our future meetings and speakers. Well that's the plan anyway – wish us luck!

Liz Revell, Chair

Southam and District SCAN

STRATFORD UPON AVON SCAN



At the April meeting Councillor Gillian Roache of Stratford District Council, who is the Older People's Champion, spoke of her role in advancing the cause of older people within the whole of the district. She was interested to learn of the problems that

over 60s encounter, especially in the rural areas, which she was anxious to address. The closing of Post Offices was of great concern.

County Council officers of the PHILLIS service spoke on the development of this new project, which will offer short term care especially for those returning from hospital. The idea is that you can live independently in your own home. Long stays in hospitals are not the answer. They are able to arrange home repairs, smoke alarms and advice on keeping the home safe. The promotion of health and wellbeing of older people in Warwickshire is of paramount importance, and they wish to identify and develop a range of support locally.

The Chair then gave reports on the Warwickshire Police initiative on uninsured drivers in the county, and mobile phone usage. The new legislation has enabled the police to do their job more effectively. The raising of the profile of road

safety is of great concern to older people.

In June Rob Weeks outlined the current rubbish and recycling arrangements, costs, and legislation, and then discussed the options being considered for the new contract to come into effect from autumn 2007. SCAN members responded:

- We want to recycle; can do paper and glass now, but what about cardboard and plastic?
- We want to support any initiative that persuades retailers to use less packaging
- We value the green waste service
- Those of us in flats and Sheltered Schemes express concern about the length of carry to the communal rubbish and recycling points.

Lesley Kendall outlined the option of Direct Payments. From the questions asked it was clear that this is an important subject to SCAN members but it is complicated. The speaker advised those present to work with the Rowan Organisation on how to take advantage of Direct Payments.

In August there were three speakers. Clarissa Roberts, Stratford Volunteer Centre spoke on the driver scheme for medical and related journeys. There are now over 700 journeys a month and people are still charged at 31p per mile. However, because of the success they need at least two days notice.

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Dave Matthews, Area Manager for CC Transport, spoke on the changes to transport schedules due to take place in the autumn. 80% of the transport budget was taken up by school transport, therefore they had to rearrange some buses. The greatest concern of SCAN was the transport to the University Hospital, Coventry. Buses from Stratford were now directed via Wellesbourne to Warwick and then one change for Coventry. This has meant very long and often inconvenient changes for patients and visitors.

Chris Mitchell spoke on the great success of the Community Links buses, and they are hoping to arrange a start at 10 to 4 rather than 9 to 3, which will help people.

Chris announced the resignation of the Chair in December after five years, and requested offers to take on this role.

Elizabeth Cole, Chair
Stratford upon Avon SCAN

EDITOR'S CORNER

A Forum member said how shocked and horrified she had been to discover that someone had been living in their caravan, which was parked just inches from their front door. "We couldn't believe it," she said. "We had no idea. We never noticed anything. Of course we shall have to sell it now, we are already looking for another caravan."

REPORTS OF MEETINGS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

UK OLDER PEOPLE'S ADVISORY GROUP (OPAG) AGM and OPAG MEETING

17TH/18TH APRIL 2007

As this was my first meeting of the UK OPAG, I was not sure what to expect. The AGM was first on the agenda, after the apologies were noted, followed by the minutes of the last AGM. The Chair read his report telling us that improvements were being made, and that he was having meetings with the Department for Work and Pensions and ministers, which he hopes will help to bring improvements to the issues that older people have.

We were told that the finances were still a problem and they were not going to get better. We are still getting £600,000 from government and £25,000 from Age Concern, Help the Aged and Anchor Trust, but this was coming to the end.

Teresa told us about the work she is involved in, such as the older persons/pensioners movement in her local area, supplying information, advice, and giving support as a representative for women and older people.

Joan Taylor, the Treasurer, told us that her report was for 2/3rds of the year due to the date of the AGM. She went on to say that each OPAG group had managed to undertake their duties within their budget.

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Joan said she hoped to recommend to the Finance Group and OPAG Executive an increase in allocation to regions/nations, but this will depend on savings being made in other ways.

The Secretary, Harry Graham, gave his report. He has been working for Age Network for ten years and OPAG for six years. He told us that no definite date has been given for BGOP to move in with the CPAS organisation, which is to cost £80,000.

The Away Day that is being arranged with the Partnership Board is hoped will be on a 50-50 basis (but who knows).

We then came to the voting for the new officers, which were very few due to most posts being unopposed.

This is a very short report on the AGM as I found it very difficult to understand what was going on. A lot of the members were very aggressive and disruptive to say the least.

Brenda Hardy

UK OPAG MEETING

18TH APRIL 2007

Mervyn Eastman was to speak about BGOP Re-imagined, but he was not well enough to attend, so Cheryl Barrott who is Associate Director and Regional Manager for Yorkshire took his place.

Cheryl said it is BGOP's approach to engage older people as valued citizens in their communities so that they can work alongside local, regional, national government, and public agencies, and show what can be achieved through effective partnerships. The aim is to promote sustainable ways of involving all older people as citizens and consumers.

Subscriptions at national and local level need to be raised to survive. 2007/2008 is a key year for the transformational plan, which is going on, to enable older people to have a better life style, and an active ageing opportunity which is not pension led.

After coffee we went into our subgroups. I am in Active Ageing, which was chaired by Harold Nielson. We started by going through the minutes of the last meeting.

Transport was to be ongoing by keeping up the pressure. It seems that there are a lot of local differences in some areas, but we were told that Local Government can and should apply for extra funding. Concessionary fares are an ongoing issue for trains and trams; it is going through the House of Commons and the House of Lords at the moment. It was asked if seat belts should be compulsory in buses and trains – this got a mixed reaction

A lot of time was spent discussion the closing of Post Offices. Many issues were raised, the main concern was that places like WH Smith are to give limited space within their shops. It was felt that we should all put pressure on to keep them as they are. Someone in the group did say that most Post Offices are losing money every week.

It was thought that Planning issues could be taken out to the industrial areas, such as Asda and Tesco to find out people's views. Also we must ask ourselves what are our priorities.

Brenda Hardy

WEST MIDLANDS OLDER PEOPLE'S ADVISORY GROUP (WM OPAG)

MEETING 9TH MAY 2007

Brad Purshouse welcomed everyone, especially Rose Powell, an officer for older people in Wolverhampton. We then discussed whether we should try to encourage other Council Officers from all areas to attend our meetings. Rose thought it would be a good idea, as we are supposed to be working in partnership with our Statutory Organisations, but warned us to remember that we are independent, and to be aware of not being taken over. Although we should be involved with the Government Office of the West Midlands, no one knew exactly where this was. Liz Mandeville, who is our officer from BGOP, is to find out and will inform us at the next meeting how to get involved.

Better Government of Older People are still working within the Help the Aged Office. They hope to move in July.

Travel concessions were discussed at length. With members coming from all over the West Midlands, and areas having different plans, it is very difficult to come to a conclusion. Birmingham appears to have the best deal, they can use their passes on all forms of transport except taxis. When the passes can be used all over the Country, this will not include services such as National Express.

Wolverhampton has a Bereavement One Stop Shop. This was started by the over-50 group

a few years ago, where people can get all the information they require. This has proved a very worthwhile service.

The Treasurer reported on our funds, which, as usual, are very low. The same issues were raised – we cannot manage on the small amount of funding we get (£1,300) per year. We were told that we are not getting an increase. After a lot of discussion it was agreed to ask the Treasurer to put our problem forward at the next meeting that is taking place at the end of May for Treasurers.

We were told that a letter has been sent to Mr Darling (Secretary of State) about the closing of the many Post Offices, and what effect it has had on the general public. Apparently there is to be a report at the end of May.

Jean, who represents Solihull, told us about a big event being held in Solihull in June 2007, called 'Engagement of Older People'. She is to ask if we can take part in this event by holding our meeting there. It was asked if they are going to invite people from the Government Office.

WM OPAG is to have a meeting at the end of May to arrange an Away Day in September.

Brenda Hardy

SEMINAR ON RESIDENTIAL CARE AND ALTERNATIVES

MONDAY 11 JUNE

John Simmons presided over the day. We were asked if we had considered going into a residential home, and everyone said that they would not if they could help it. So what conditions would make us go. Among them were:

- Illness of the carer
- Living alone and unable to cope
- Getting old and frail
- Lack of support

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Alternatives would be:

- Home care
- Day centres
- Sheltered housing
- Visiting services

There is no national standard for when care should be provided. We asked why had funding for adult learning stopped. Apparently the Government has transferred the funding to training the unemployed. The result of this is that people who are unable to pay the high fees stay at home.

Several case studies of people on very low incomes were given, showing that many people need help. The strategy on payments, we were told, is that people pay £400 a week if they have more than £8000 in savings. When this is used up it is free.

It was agreed that many people would benefit from low level services in order to stay in their own homes. But how do we get these services implemented?

Brenda Hardy

CARE SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP GROUP (CSIP)

WEST MIDLANDS OLDER PERSON REFERENCE GROUP

18 JUNE 2007

Papers entitled 'Everybody's Business, a Key Message for Commissioners' were handed out, on integrated mental health services for older adults. Mike Rochfort (Older Persons Mental Health Programme Lead) joined us. He told us that older people's needs are very complex. Physical and mental health issues should be treated as a whole, from the 60% of older people who suffer from depression to more serious mental health problems, mostly dementia. A lot of people do not seek help.

A frail older person going into hospital will quite often go into depression on discharge. This needs to be addressed. There are some improvements, but there is a long way to go. Age discrimination is still happening and has to be looked at. The Government is considering the question of more support, and it is hoped some positive structures will be put in place very soon. I asked if the care and support would be provided 24 hours a day, and every day if needed? And will the home care staff be adequately trained in mental health awareness and communication skills?

The next issues were around the different styles of working of Adult, Health and Community Services and the National Health Service. They need to work together with pooled resources, but tension is easily built up between the two Services.

Educating, and support, being given to the older person, especially the low level depression clients, will improve health well-being before it becomes a more serious mental health problem.

It was asked if provision would be made for Care at Home patients. Mental health patients need a special service. There is a mental health training for the community mental health team staff, to support main stream staff, but they need easy access to it. I understand that some of the following main issues

are being considered by the Commissioners for improving mental health problems: - promoting dignity and care; age appropriate services; respect; personal care; special intermediate care at home, and so on.

We were then told that 70 older people in Warwickshire committed suicide last year. This surprised us.

This meeting was very productive. I have said that I would take a short report of the meeting to OPAG, my own Forum, WOPF and the Partnership Board. An offer was made to attend any of our meetings to give a presentation and take part in a discussion. I feel a lot of work has been put into this group, and it should be taken on board to make sure we obtain better mental health services.

Brenda Hardy

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CUSTOMER FIRST CONFERENCE

29TH JUNE 2007

About 150 Carers and Users assembled for the Conference. The day was opened by Graeme Betts, Strategic Director of Adult Health and Community Services. He spoke of his commitment to the Partnership Boards that had been set up. He felt that there should be closer working across all Partnership Boards and there should be a Carers Partnership Board. More money will be given to PHILLIS project so that the service can expand. He wanted to promote more public involvement in recruitment of staff – to get the public's view and shared responsibility to get the right person in the right job.

Marlene Venni, a user of the services gave a short address and introduced the programme for the day – the participants would give presentations of their use of Direct Payments to meet their Care needs.

Lesley Kendall then gave a presentation explaining the Direct Payments Scheme and how it is working, in liaison with the Rowan organisation. At present 350 people are participating in the scheme, but it needs to grow.

Several people now gave personal accounts of how Direct Payments work for them. One became wheelchair bound following an accident. She was able to live as a proper parent in her own home with her children. Another suffers with

MS, and has been able to have his own personal assistant. A third has a Personal Assistant who allows her sister, who had been her full-time carer, to follow her own career. The fourth is a Carer of his mother and has used Direct Payments to allow her to remain independent.

From the variety of questions from the floor it emerged that each individual who is assessed is means tested, based on income and savings. The Government has not set aside funds for Direct Payments. Each County has to manage from within the existing budget.

The audience was then divided into work groups to discuss: What would stop you having a Direct Payment; What support would you need?; If you had a Direct Payment what services would you need. These questions prompted much discussion and lists of detailed conclusions.

Brenda Hardy

TELECARE COMMISSIONING BOARD MEETING

15TH AUGUST 2007

Jon Whiting chaired the meeting. The good news is that the Telecare Service is going live in the three areas on 20 August 2007.

The Smart Flats. After the disappointment that the first flats were found to be unsuitable, it is hoped that the Stratford Flat could be at Saltway Day Centre, and Rugby are having negotiations with the Library Service to see if one of the mobile vans would be suitable.

Several public events have been arranged for September and October, and it was suggested that Telecare should have a stand at these to promote the service. After some discussion it was agreed that some display boards should be purchased.

Leaflets promoting the service are at the printers. Most of them are going to the Customer First Team, but we all asked to have some sent to us. Telecare will work closely with the PHILLIS team.

There are three properties ready to be fitted out with some of the equipment. These are for people with learning difficulties. The firm that is supplying the equipment is 'Tunstall'. Age Concern are to do the installations – this will be free to users.

The Rehab Hospital in Warwick is to be looked at to see if any of this equipment would be of benefit to the clients that are there.

Jon has spoken to the Fire and Rescue Service about the smoke alarms. They thought that all the Telecare homes' smoke alarms would be connected directly to the Fire Service, but they will be connected to the Telecare Hub.

Training has taken place, and will be available for new staff as and when they are taken on.

It has been agreed that the under-spending of the funding can be carried over for twelve months, and that we should think of putting in a request for funding for 2009/2010.

Brenda Hardy

RECYCLING

*First of all yer gets yer compost bin
Then all yer veggie waste goes in.
In olden days to quicken the rot
They emptied in the chamber pot!!
Insects go in, it is within their range,
It starts heating up and that makes it change.
It's very nutritious when it is finished
And will revive a garden when diminished.
All will enjoy, flowers, birds and bees
And Mother Nature will be pleased.
Reducing the ugly land-fill site
Recycling is the answer so join the fight.
Give it a go for all you're worth
And you will become a friend of the earth.*

**Nancy Cooper
Stratford SCAN**

THE OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Older People's Services Partnership Board has adopted six priority areas for attention in all the work it does and recommends, and the local representatives have agreed among themselves the areas to which each should pay particular attention.

The areas they have chosen are:

Margaret Smith – Safety at home and in the Community. Improving information, especially regarding the PHILLIS service.

Brenda Hardy – Preventive support services in the community. Specific interest in TELECARE service.

Michael Piper – Supporting people in their home, with specific interest in Housing and Hospital Discharge

Mike Gerrard – Equality, access and dignity, and Valuing Older People. Specific interest in Community Protection.

Dorothy Goodwin – Improving access to information and advice. Specific interest in Community Health Services.

Mike Gerrard

Volunteer Representative for Stratford District

SOME PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS OF OUR BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

MICHAEL PIPER

The Older People's Services Partnership Board has its next meeting in September, when we will be discussing our selection of the strategic priorities, and forming the necessary links with the respective service providers.

I am very keen to get started on this project because I know some readers have strong feelings about how these services are being delivered. I want to see a real difference where needed in the way service users in Warwick District are treated, so if there are any specific matters that anyone would like me to deal with in relation to my chosen topics, please let me know through the WCC, Shire Hall, Warwick post box.

Michael Piper

Volunteer Representative
for Warwick District

MIKE GERRARD

When I last reported on the Partnership Board I remarked that six priority areas had been identified to provide the ethos for Care Services in Warwickshire, and that the Board has begun to flex its strategic muscle. I also noted that the Older People's Representatives on the Board had concluded that they needed to talk seriously with the voluntary organisations in the county, which are also service providers, in order to develop an understanding between the two voluntary components.

The Board itself has virtually been in recess since then. Members took part in an "Away Day" at Kenilworth in May, where the draft report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection on Warwickshire Services was received and noted, pending issue of the final report.

The Older People's Representatives have also been busy, meeting as a group to debate the outcome of the Away Day, to take forward their plans for closer links with the voluntary bodies, and to recap with the Older People's Champions in the county on progress made on both sides. They attended the CSCI Report meeting in July, and met the voluntary groups formally at the Age Concern offices in Leamington the following week. Dorothy Goodwin was nominated as Vice Chair of the Partnership Board, with Michael Piper as reserve nomination (if needed).

Mark Pearce of Age Concern, the Voluntary Community Service representative on the Partnership Board, attended the meetings of the Older People's Representatives in July, providing the opportunity for an exchange of views between them and the leading lights of the service-providing voluntary organisations, including CVS. This is expected to be the first of regular meetings through which closer linkages and co-operation can be built.

As seems to be the way in such matters, having just got to know Mark Pearce, we discovered that this was to be his last meeting, since he will now be working in the West Midlands. Nonetheless it is to be hoped that this connection will develop, and that the voice of the voluntary sector will in future be heard at equal strength on the Partnership Board to those of the County Council, the PCT and the emergency services.

Mike Gerrard

Volunteer Representative
For Stratford District

BRENDA HARDY

Meetings of the Partnership Board have been fairly quiet for the last three months. We are waiting to meet at the end of September to hear the follow up of the Away Day in May. We put forward our main concerns, of the services that we felt needed some clarification, and more input of some services. This is the reason for the long wait for a meeting.

At the July meeting of the Representatives, Mark Pearce (Voluntary Community Network) came. We all felt that we wanted to work alongside the Voluntary Sector, and with whoever takes over his role. It was at this meeting that we were asked to decide who was going to be Vice Chair of the Partnership Board. All were in favour of Dorothy Goodwin. I am sure she will be excellent.

I have been fortunate enough to be involved,

along with Borough Councillors, to look at the Mental Health Services in Rugby. It is being discussed that all Rugby Services move to Coventry, but that is not what the local people want. We spent the whole day, starting at the Lindon Unit, the crisis team, and all the external services around Rugby. Then we went to the Caludon Centre, which is impressive. We were welcomed by Sandy Taylor, Chief Executive, Mental Health Trust. Then we were taken round the Graduate facilities – these were excellent – then round two of the wards, and the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit, which Rugby has not got.

I am finding that being a representative on the Partnership Board is very interesting.

Brenda Hardy

Volunteer Representative
For Rugby

MARGARET SMITH

The last meeting of the Board, three months ago in May, took the form of an Away Day in which feedback from the recent Social Care Inspection was discussed, and areas requiring improvement highlighted. These include, mental health, carers, and the development of a strategy for older people's services. We are now aware of the spring consultation phase for Warwickshire's planned strategy, 'Quality of Life for an Ageing Population', now analysed and ready for implementation. Some of us attended one of the countrywide workshops in which the principles and practicalities of setting up a Partnership Board for Carers were thoroughly debated – progress. It seems that mental health services are patchy throughout the county, indicating a real need for a strategy and equality in provision.

Given the county-wide organisational restructuring and repositioning required over the past eighteen months, the need for clear overall strategy and the practicalities of implementing multi-agency plans at district level in Local Level Agreements, it would be unfair to expect too much too soon. Warwickshire does provide some excellent support for its older residents, and when focussing on the gaps it is easy to become negative.

However, throughout our rather dismal summer, the national media have reported on issues that concern us all – Government acknowledgement of the existence of unacceptable low care standards for the elderly and their lack of 'voice', relatively poor performance in stroke care,, the increase in distraction burglary, growing concerns about the provision and cost of long term care.

The Board's partner agencies have had an acceptable warm-up period and now need to increase output momentum, demonstrating:

- Strong support for Dorothy Goodwin, voluntary representative for older people and service users
- High level participation and commitment of all partners
- Joined up multi-agency solutions to need that improve outcomes for older people
- Achievement against agreed targets reported in a form that can be relayed back, on a regular basis, to Area Forums and other older people's groups.

Margaret Smith

Volunteer Representative
For North Warwickshire

DOROTHY GOODWIN

At the Away Day in May we agreed on three prime areas that we would develop:

1. A Warwickshire Partnership Board for Carers, with a member of this Board on it and vice versa. A meeting of interested people has already been held.
2. Mental Health Services. The Board to be actively involved in the development of a Mental Health Strategy. Both Brenda Hardy and I have been asked to sit on a Task Force Group to look at this. We have attended one meeting.
3. To review and update Hospital Discharge Procedures. Work in continuing in all areas, some better than others.

The five Older People's Representatives have continued to meet during the summer months. I have met with my partner at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Alan Davies; Silver Surfer, Roger Hook; and our new Champion, Neil Phillips, as well as Kerry Clay who is the Lead Nurse for Older People at the George Eliot Hospital. Together we are focusing on the Local Area Agreements; the impact of Older People in Hospital; delayed discharges; and the work of the Partnership Board – as well as supporting the Local Forum.

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I have done my first presentation about the role of the Partnership Board Representative to the Black and Ethnic Minority groups at a day centre in Nuneaton, with the help of some very valuable interpreters.

At the last Representatives meeting I agreed to be nominated as the Vice Chair of the Board. This will need to get to a full Board Meeting for agreement. It is a big challenge to meet, but if you want change you have to go for it.

Dorothy Goodwin

Voluntary Representative

For Nuneaton and Bedworth

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If any of the information in this publication is difficult to understand, we can provide it in another format. Please call Jane Walkeden on 01926 418012