



WOLVERHAMPTON OVER 50s FORUM
Secretary: Mr. Roy Russell MBE
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SPEAK AND BE HEARD

MINUTES OF O'50s FORUM HELD ON 21ST JANUARY 2004
COMMITTEE ROOM 3 CIVIC CENTRE

1. Apologies

Mr M & Mrs D. Gravestock, Mr T & Mrs J Russell, M.Pearce, E. Buttery,
J. Price, G. Wade, Mr B & Mrs R Davies, J.Price, J.Ray

Present:

31 Members plus Anne Bailey, David Pafford, Chris Raine, Rose Powell,

2. Speaker

ACTION

Mark Paffard Project Officer for Supporting People. This is a small team based in the housing department. Supporting People is a new programme that delivers and manages housing support – mainly a provision of staffing to assist vulnerable people this allows them to maintain tenancy.

Supporting people is a new way of funding the housing related support services provided for people who need help to live more independently. This type of support is provided to tenants in sheltered or supported housing schemes. The service is responsible for determining who needs the service, who should provide them and how they should be paid for. It is a government initiative which covers: older people, homeless people, sufferers of domestic violence, mental health, and young people at risk.

Support is any assistance which helps people to remain independent i.e. form filling, budgeting, domestic skills, help to relieve isolation, assistance with bill paying. It **excludes** personal care. The key concept is to arrange a support plan with the service user's co-operation. Mark reviews and monitors support provided and ensures that service plans meet the service user's needs. They ensure the health and safety of schemes, protection from abuse, fair access and equality.

Support can be short term; young people in hostels can be helped to move on by supporting people. They can help Older People and People with Disabilities to remain in their homes.

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There is a cost attached to this service. This cost used to be included in rents but is now a separate charge. For people in long term care there are various rates. A financial assessment has to be carried out. If someone is living in sheltered or very sheltered accommodation, Supporting People may fund part of the costs.

For owner occupiers Supporting People now fund the Care & Repair service which gives advice on grants and repairs.

Q. Does this service relate solely to council tenants?

Any tenants, people in sheltered housing.

Q. So there is nothing available for owner occupiers?

The care and repair service is the main service available though there is 'floating support' which theoretically could be applied for.

Q. What would floating support offer?

A service provided to allow people to maintain independence but not to include personal care.

Q. There appears to be a large duplication of services within the City Council. Money is being put into so many schemes. The Neville Garrett Centre provides virtually the same service that you are describing, is there actually a need for the Supporting People service? Couldn't the 8 million pounds be put to better use elsewhere in Wolverhampton?

Supporting People needs to review all services and develop a strategy to ensure that duplication of services does not happen.

Q. Older people who are owner occupiers need more help in accessing repairs to their homes; also the traditional home help service no longer exists. Couldn't Supporting People take over that role?

Home Help service is not part of the remit of Supporting People so couldn't comment. Anne Bailey explained that home help service is no longer available due to the high demands on the service due to an increasingly ageing population and the need for increased personal care.

Q. How many people over the age of 50 have been helped by the Supporting People service?

Unsure at the moment will be able to tell in time.

Q. There are more owner occupiers than tenants in Wolverhampton yet services seem to be loaded towards tenants. I feel that it would be a good scheme if it was available across the board. What is your opinion?

Mark was unable to comment at this time.

Q. What is your input into local area housing offices? If there is none do you propose to change this in the future? Housing offices should be aware of services and publicity could be distributed from there.

There is no input at the moment but Mark will take that idea back and discuss with colleagues

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Charles Sammonds requested an amendment of Decembers minutes under Any Other Business. Pensioners Consortium should read; **Pensioners Convention**. National average earnings should read; **a decent percentage** of national average earnings.

The minutes of the Meeting held on 21st January 2003 were then agreed as a true record, proposed by A. Evans and seconded by R. Girdler

4. Matters arising

R. Jones again referred to the Over 50's forum and the Pensioners Convention working more closely together. He explained that the Convention had asked him to bring this to the forum. Brad repeated that the Over 50's forum is an umbrella that any older persons group can become a member of. In doing so issues can be brought to the attention of the forum which in turn can be discussed with the City Council. It was pointed out to Reg that he is an independent member and as such should not be discussing issues on behalf of a group. If the Convention wished him to be a spokesperson then the Convention should join as a group member. A reminder was made that the Over 50's forum works in conjunction with Older People, Older People's Advisory Group and Better Government for Older People. The group was set up by Better Government for Older People to work with all Providers and Service Users. The Pensioners Convention could work with the forum if they wished.

C. Sammonds: The objectives of the two groups though compatible, differ. Pensioners Convention was set up to improve state pensions, the Over 50's forum was set up to improve the quality of life for people in Wolverhampton and to tackle local issues. Why is the convention looking at issues that the Over 50's forum is already committed to?

M. Nicholls replied that the issue referred to regarding toilet closure was a letter sent in support of Rob Marris MP regarding the closure of the Woolpack Alley toilets and that the Convention were not looking in depth at the provision of toilets in the city.

Anne Bailey: The Pensioners Convention wrote to the council as they felt that they should have more involvement. The reply was that the Over 50's forum was the umbrella group set up to bring groups of Older People together. If the Pensioners Convention wants to be more involved they should join as a group member.

5. Chairman's remarks

Membership fees are now due can you please let either Dave Walker or Rose Powell have subscriptions as soon as possible.

A reminder that next months meeting is the AGM and that all information and nominations forms are currently being sent out.

Brad read out a letter from Sarah McNicol – Research Fellow from UCE. She is conducting research into the impact that libraries have had on people since the Second World War. She is looking for people to interview if anyone is interested in taking part in the research please contact Brad for details.

6. Treasurers report

There is currently £805.00 in the fund. Brad requested a full report for next months AGM.

7. Correspondence

Letter re: scrutiny panels. Chris Raine Assistant Chief Executive is coming in under AOB to discuss.

8. Sub committee reports

Loos

Jean Girdler thanked Charles Sammonds for his assistance at this months meeting. They are going to look at the plans of the Queens Building area to ascertain the toilet provision within the scheme. Problems with the Falkland Street unit was discussed. Suggestions were made that Jean should contact the coach companies that use the coach park and arrange a meeting with their representatives, the City Council and the over 50's forum. The results of these meetings should form the basis for the discussion with Councillor Andrew Johnson when it is arranged.

Health

Marjorie Wedge asked for a vote on a survey that she has been asked to take part in by the health authority. The government is saying that patients should see copies of **all** correspondence appertaining to their treatment that is sent between the G.P. and consultant and all correspondence between departments. Marjorie pointed out that this would mean up to 400.000 additional letters having to be sent out. The cost of that would obviously have to be met by the hospital which could lead to a reduction in health services.

VOTE 17 Members were against receiving this information due to cost implications.

8 members were for.

Marjorie agreed to pass this information on via the survey.

Public Safety

John Partridge attended to talk about road safety issues. A 20mph speed limit has been applied for in Bilston. There was a discussion about pavement gritting when roads are gritted and concern about vehicles using pedestrianised areas.

Members felt that there was also an issue around side roads being gritted.

9. AOB

Chris Raine Assistant Chief Executive answered the letter regarding scrutiny panels. She pointed out that David Plant is the over 50's forum co-opted member on the Health, Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Panel. She said that clearly the over 50's forum would continue to have a say in scrutiny panels. She wanted to give assurances that there has been no change in arrangements re; co-opted members. We are not only going to be using 'experts'. The forum and other groups will still be consulted and involved. She then handed over to David Plant to give an overview of the work that he carries out.

The Scrutiny Panel work is ongoing and very busy. There is another meeting on Thursday after which he will have more to report back to the forum.

Date of next meeting

**10.00am Wednesday 17th March 2004.
Committee room 3, Civic Centre**