



SPEAK AND BE HEARD

**Minutes of Over 50s Forum Wednesday
20th June 2007, Civic Centre**

Apologies: Gurdev Singh Bal, Su Pascoe, Eddie Grizzle, Jim Speakman

Present: 36 members, Councillor Alan Smith, Paramjit Kaur, Pamanit Singh Dalu visitors from Walsall Over 50s forum

Item		Actions
1.	<p>Brad welcomed Councillor Alan Smith who attended to introduce himself as the new Older Peoples Champion he told forum that he would try to attend future meetings.</p> <p>Brad also welcomed representatives from Age Concern and Walsall Over 50s forum.</p> <p>Speakers – Brian O’Leary – Chief Officer Adults and Transformation Brian gave a presentation and overview of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the changes agreed by cabinet, namely Fair Access to Care, Transport Services Access criteria and Charging for Services. Copies of the presentation available on request.</p> <p>Questions / Comments Was there any consultation carried out, who with, if so can we see the report? Yes the report was written for cabinet and Rose will ensure that they are available for anyone who wishes to see them. We spoke to groups and organisations rather than individuals, we wrote to organisations such as Age Concern for views.</p> <p>We feel that as a group we are frequently used for consultation and do not always receive feedback on the outcomes, do you view consultation and involvement in a positive manner or do you just use us to tick boxes? We view consultation in a very positive manner, we listen and try to make changes.</p> <p>If you have capital of £21.500.00 and are assessed to pay 120.00 is that per week or month? That is the cost for a weekly service - £120.00 is the maximum anyone would pay, if your service doesn’t cost £120.00 you would only pay what the service actually costs.</p> <p>The Council seem to be in a no win situation with three cuts from Central Government, you should be ensuring that the Government gives</p>	

	<p>sufficient money. What are your views on this? When Wolverhampton gets notice of funding we send representation and tell Government they are not giving us enough money. They may make a small adjustment but nothing major. Money is granted on rising populations and unfortunately Wolverhampton's is decreasing which means less money due to the formula that the Government uses.</p> <p>Fair access to care - In changing 4 bands to 2 how far has the council got with its review process? Also when you move people out of paid for services will you measure the impact? We are at the very beginning of the review process if you do not meet the critical or substantial criteria for services but may do soon after in the opinion of the assessor, that will be taken into account.</p> <p>Comment - A lot of the assessment is financial not care I think this is the wrong emphasis the assessment should be based on care needs not financial.</p> <p>When we are asked to be involved in consultation we mainly get information from the press which is not always accurate, We then feel disillusioned as we are not in receipt of the full facts and don't receive enough information to be fully involved in consultation.</p> <p>I'm unhappy that you feel that's the case it is important to ensure sufficient information and feedback from people carrying out the consultation. Some of our consultations involve service users not the wider public in general; we will take your comments on board.</p> <p>In the Sunday Observer there was an article on dignity at home for older people. It highlighted an older person severely arthritic and doubly incontinent who had her weekly bath removed by social services and had to fight to have it reinstated. I am concerned that something like that could happen in Wolverhampton with these new criteria. I am worried that there will be lost care needs and incidences of people slipping through the net due to isolation and no family members to fight for them. Other forum members agreed.</p> <p>Will there be sufficient increases in pensions to allow people to pay these higher care prices? My personal belief is that pension rises don't give enough, you should lobby central Government and ensure that people get the right benefits.</p> <p>Mr Rai-Central Government waste money that should be directed to better services.</p> <p>Brian said that he would be happy to return to the forum and that when they have seen the reports if any other questions arise he will be happy to return to answer them.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of last meeting Minutes agreed, proposed by Roy Girdler and seconded by David Walker</p>	

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3.	<p>Chairmans remarks</p> <p>West Midlands OPAG is arranging a conference at the Botanical Gardens in October, each area should take three representatives.</p> <p>Also attended meeting with Sandra Hollinshead Community Safety Officer to discuss organising a social event for older people some time next year.</p>	
4.	<p>Treasurers Report</p> <p>Forum has £1028.91 in its account (funds recently paid out for computer maintenance)</p>	

5.	<p>Correspondence No correspondence received</p>	
6.	<p>Sub Committee Reports Housing Lesley Roberts – Chief Executive of Wolverhampton Homes is attending the next committee meeting on July 6th at 2pm in the leisure conference room, Pat would like as many people as possible to attend. Mike Nicholls – there are concerns about the number of housing offices being closed; I think eventually there will only be four housing offices left. Pat – If Wolverhampton Homes is going to start on the work for the decent homes standard where are they getting the money from? Mike they are getting a loan of 3.4 million from the council.</p>	
	<p>Transport David had a directory available of numbers for the different bus companies.</p>	
	<p>Education The consultation on the Older Learners Strategy has been postponed to September next meeting is on Monday July 16th.</p>	
	<p>Report from Marjorie on Bereavement Centre Marjorie attended BC meeting where there was a long discussion on the cost of funerals and the need to check different funeral directors, so that when someone dies you are aware of which funeral director you wish to use. A simple funeral can cost as much as £3,200.00 and this price varies enormously. If someone dies without relatives social services pay for the funeral. If the person is in receipt of benefits an application has to be made through DWP for a grant. This takes up to 10 weeks and the funeral cannot be arranged during that time, the funeral director in these circumstance require a deposit of £600.00 to keep the deceased in the mortuary. Dennis Kennedy Age Concern – I recently helped in a case where this happened, it is a very complicated, serious matter and can lead to great distress to people involved.</p> <p>Everyone should be encouraged to make a will, though when you do, don't appoint the bank or solicitor as trustees as that is very expensive. Age Concern has a very good funeral plan and also writes wills. Mr Rai – Unison also writes wills for free. Marjorie had leaflets and posters available.</p>	
	<p>Any Other Business Mike Nicholls - Review on garage rents – instead of there being three different bands for rents charged they will be the same for everyone. Pat said that is not the case for non council tenants that will be a higher rate.</p>	
	<p>Next Meeting: Wednesday 18th July 2007 Committee Room 3, Third Floor, Civic Centre</p>	