



**WOLVERHAMPTON OVER 50s FORUM**  
Secretary: Mr. Roy Russell MBE  
196 Warstones Road, Penn  
Wolverhampton WV4 4LF

Tel: 01902 332728

**SPEAK AND BE HEARD**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2003 AT 10.00 A.M. AT THE CIVIC CENTRE WOLVERHAMPTON**

**1. Apologies**

Brad Purshouse Jenny Purshouse David Walker Charles Sammonds  
Ivy Sammonds David Plant Mike Nicholls Howard Lampart Odelyn  
Reid Trevor Russell Joan Russell John Ray

**Present**

Attendance register showed 29 members, plus Emma Palmer (Network Development Officer) ,Alison Grocutt and colleague from the Pension Service and Mr GS. Dhaliwal from the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwana

**2. Speaker**

Jim Introduced the speaker for the day as Alison Grocutt from the Pension Service. Alison had attended the forum to talk about the recent changes to the Pension Service.

Alison started by telling members that the Pension Service was part of the Department for Works and Pensions which replaced the Benefits Agency last year. Pensions are now dealt with in 26 locations across the country, Wolverhampton has one of the locations in Temple Street.

However it was pointed out that this was a administration point only and if people needed to talk about their pension they had to do so through the Pension Service advice surgeries that take place across the City. Alison gave a list of the locations where these surgeries take place **(appendix 1)**

Alison explained they do drop in sessions appointments and home visits for anyone with pension queries. A universal telephone number is used **0845 60 60 265** this number automatically connects you to the correct office location nearest to where you are calling from. Lines are open from 8am – 8pm for all enquiries.

**ACTION**

**Pension Service Information to be included in the minutes**

Alison went on to explain a series of changes that were due to take place in the next 12 months:

- Direct payment into a bank/ building society /post office account
- Advance notification of the new Pension Credit
- Letter to claim Pension Credit
- A staggered pension credit claims process
- Pension Credit come in during October
- People over 65 are going to be rewarded for saving, figures are not available as it is too complicated a formula to explain how it is worked out.

The group then went on to ask some questions:

**Q** Do they pay Pensions in Arrears monthly with the new system?

**A** Yes it is in arrears but is now available weekly

**Q** How long does it take to sort out having paid into an account?

**A** You are able to use your book to collect pension up until the time the book runs out, by then it goes automatically into the account.

**Q** Are the new PIN cards able to be used at any Post Office and do you have to draw it all at once?

**A** Yes it can be drawn anywhere in the country and you can leave some money in the account.

Alison went on to point out that the new key pads will eventually be replaced in all Post Offices by a better system. It was felt they were not suitable for use by all those needing to use them. Alison explained PIN numbers can be changed to suit individuals so they can remember them.

**Q** Is there a limit to how long you can leave money in your PIN account?

**A** Not as far as Alison is aware, but some members felt this could be three months as with the book system for Pensions being received.

**Q** Can you set up a standing order from the account?

**A** No you cant with the Post Office system, but you can if your Pension is paid into a bank account.

**Q** If you go abroad for long periods how will this affect the Pension

Account?

**A** It will be the same as with a book after a certain length of time possibly three months it will make a difference. Bank accounts are the better option here.

**Q** Is there an intention to make all banks accessible through the Post Office as some are now?

**A** Not at this time but I think it is a sensible idea.

**Q** Would it affect other benefits if you do save your Pension?

**A** With Minimum Income Guarantee it would but not with Pension Credit., with the new reward system it could benefit some people.

Alison was thanked by the Vice Chairman for attending the meeting.

Mr Reg Bradley then introduced Mr G.S Dhaliwal to the group he told how the Guru Nanak Gurdwara had donated £21,000 to New Cross Hospital Trust. People applauded the gesture, discussion on the merits of all types of voluntary work took place and the importance of working within a integrated community.

### **3. Minutes of the last Meeting**

The minutes of the Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2003 were agreed as a true record, proposed by Marjorie Wedge and seconded by Mrs Pat Whittaker

### **4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

### **5. Chairman's Remarks**

Jim explained that the Chairman was unavailable this month and he would chair the meeting, he feels the forum is going well and the sub committee's work is invaluable

### **6. Treasurers Report**

The treasurer reported :-

£909.18 in the account for this month plus monies for the development of a website for the forum.

## 7. Correspondence

Roy told the group he had received a letter from Mike Nicholls giving his resignation from the forum as of the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2003. Mike Nicholls contribution to the forum was commended and his presence will be greatly missed. It was agreed that Mike should be written to and thanked for his contribution and informed the door was always open for him to return to the forum should he wish.

A healthy debate ensued on the merits of the organisation. Two new members spoke of their reasons for joining the forum today. It was explained that they had met with Mike Nicholls and he had spoken with such enthusiasm about the group they had immediately come along to join. It was expressed that the group was doing a good job.

A member stated he could not see what the results were from the forums work, he was responded to by a number of members stating that if he joined a sub committee he would see the evidence of the work going on and the achievements.

Roy Russell said he had reviewed the forums correspondence over the last three years with Emma Palmer and 90% of the issues raised had received a positive outcome. The other 10% had not been answered as yet and were being chased up at the moment. Roy felt quite upset at the comments made about non achievement as he himself feels as though the work he has done is being questioned.

## 8. Sub Committee Reports

### 8.1 Housing sub committee

Jacque updated members on the current situation with the Housing Sub committee in Mike's absence. Emma Palmer told the group that Mike had represented the Housing Sub Committee at a conference last week, he had forwarded the notes from the meeting about the Housing Options and Emma will summarise this for members in the near future.

Emma gave the date of the next Housing meeting as 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2003 2pm in Briefing Room 1, Civic Centre. A letter and Agenda for the meeting will be sent out in due course to members but anyone wishing to attend is welcome. Anne Bailey will be attending the meeting to offer her advice and support to the group and to look at what issues the group would like to take forward.

**Roy  
Russell to  
write a  
letter to  
Mike  
Nicholls**

## 8.2 Public Safety

Jim Speakman read out a report to the forum from the last meeting of the sub committee (**appendix 2**) Jim talked also of a document regarding the current situation with Fireworks.

## 8.3 Health Sub Committee

Marjorie read out a report to members from the sub committee (**appendix 3**)

Aida Morris, a member of the sub committee, stated that the Integrated community equipment services project required representation on its user committee from people with disabilities. The group were asked to contact Aida if they are able to send some representatives along to the group.

## 8.4 Communication Sub Committee

Report of the recent meeting will be attached to the minutes (**appendix 4**)

It was agreed that the process of how to deal with issues within the sub committee framework still existed. The sub committees were to do work on uncovering the issues and if they hit a brick wall they could report to the main forum and Roy as secretary would take the issues up. The discussion then took place on how the housing sub committee had hit a brick wall and some suggestions were made about what was required. It was agreed that the housing Sub committee would write a report about the situation with one specific case and the forum could chase the matter up. The suggestion was also made that the lady concerned with this case may benefit from the use of a Advocate through Age Concern.

## 9. Any Other Business

A situation with the emptying of bins in Pendeford was brought up. Asylum seekers were raised again as a issue. It was expressed that the forum needed some more information on this subject.

## 10. Date of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2003, 10am – 12noon in Committee Room 3 Third Floor, Civic Centre, Wolverhampton.

**Emma Palmer to organise summary from recent meeting attended by Mike Nicholls**

**Jim Speakman to pass document to Emma Palmer to allow copies for members to be taken**

**Members to contact Aida Morris if they feel able to be involved in the group.**