



**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 O'50s FORUM HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2005**  
**COMMITTEE ROOM 3 CIVIC CENTRE**

**Apologies:** Mr & Mrs Sammonds, Mr Speakman, Mrs Morris, Mr & Mrs Girdler, Ms Saunders, Mr Lampart, Mrs McNish, Mr Jones, Mr & Mrs Davies, Mr Mellor, Mrs Wedge, Mrs Purshouse

**Present:** 27 members, M.Nicholls R.Powell

**1. Speakers**

**Richard Ellis - Artist**

Richard has been commissioned to do some work for the new sheltered housing scheme which is being developed in Chetton Green. He is looking for older people who have memories of that area or who worked at Boulton Pauls. This will help him to decide what images are appropriate. Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact Rose.

**Kashmir Pawar – Mencap**

Kashmir is looking at the needs of older carers who are looking after someone with learning difficulties. She can act as an advocate for older people in this situation.

**Lorna Smith**

Lorna works for Wolverhampton and Bilston Art Galleries and museums and is currently finding out how older people would like to be more involved. She will come to a future meeting of the forum.

**Brian Gamble – Customer Relations and Complaints Manager – Social Services**

The reason that the council has a complaints procedure is because we are required to by law. One of the roles, as well as dealing with difficulties is to be involved with child protection issues. The procedure is very useful as it gives clarity on complaints and representations, there are twice as many compliments as complaints. Performance quality teams can learn from compliments and complaints, any complaints received are fed back to the relevant service area. The procedure gives a chance to complain and ensures that the council has to respond within specified time scales. It gives quality feedback, good or bad, and highlights bad practise and helps us to plan and improve services.

- Informal – 28 days to respond, each stage is evaluated.
- Formal – this is investigated by someone independent to the service if no satisfaction is gained from the informal stage.
- Independent review panel
- If no satisfaction with previous stages the person then has the right to approach the ombudsman. All contacts are shown in the complaints form.

Most complaints are dealt with on the spot but it is important that customers know their rights. If you are aware of the procedure and have some knowledge of the law this will help you to get satisfactory outcomes. There is a compliments and complaints form available virtually everywhere in council buildings. Some people write in asking for staff to be dismissed, the complaint has to be realistic, the organisation takes responsibility for staff's actions.

## **Questions**

Complaints made about bins etc. are often not taken seriously, no answers are given to queries and it is implied that the problem is your fault. Is there a central office that you can go to ensure complaints are dealt with?

Yes City Direct can be contacted about all council departments, though the formal Chief Execs complaints procedure can also be used for corporate complaints.

What do you do if council staff ignores requests?

The corporate complaints procedure would be the best way forward..

Can you override departments reactions to complaints?

You should get an answer from the department, though a lot of what we do is mediation.

Complaints to social services are going down. Mike Nicholls pointed out that complaints are going up in other departments particularly housing can you comment?

Managers are trying to improve services genuinely though we do struggle with some services.

If you ask to see a Head of Service what chance would you have?

If a complaint is in progress the Directors and Chief Exec would stay out of it as they may need to be involved later in the complaints procedure.

## **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of last month were agreed as a true record. Proposed by Ms O'Dowd seconded by Mr Gabb.

## **3. Matters arising**

Pg 4: G.P's appointments have we heard anything else?

We are awaiting a response as to who would be the most appropriate person to invite to forum.

## **4. Chairman's remarks**

Dennis Webb from Age Concern has sent an invite to an event at the Britannia Hotel on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June at 11.00am and 1.00pm. This will take the form of a theatrical performance to heighten the awareness of distraction burglaries. At the end of the

performance delegates will be given a crime prevention pack and the opportunity of having fitted free door chains and door viewers. Please contact Rose or Dennis on 572075 to reserve a place. Admission and refreshments free.

## **5. Correspondence**

Forum has received a Help the Aged policy update. There was also enclosed a new document on Quality of Life in Older People. Anyone wanting copies please contact Rose.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

£1328.52 currently available.

## **7. Sub committee reports**

### **Housing**

Helen Bellingham from house sales attended the meeting, see minutes attached.  
See Appendix 1

Mike Nicholls was at the forum and told about his role as a tenant's representative on the ALMO board and said that they too are concerned about leaseholder issues. He advised Pat that she should invite the Chief Executive of Wolverhampton Homes Mr Bruce Moore and invite him to a future meeting.

No other sub committee reports available.

### **Any Other Business**

Mike Nicholls asked why no one from the Over 50's forum had attended the public enquiry re; the closure of Woolpack Alley – no one was aware of the meeting taking place.

There is a perfume scam currently in the West Midlands. People are approached, usually on car parks, and offered designer perfume, when they smell it, it contains ether which leaves the person unable to move and they are robbed. Please be aware.

Has anything been heard about the re routing of the bus route 513?

Concerns were raised about the recent report in the Express and Star re; councillors expenses and the amounts that were being claimed.

### **Date of next meeting**

**10am Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2005 (please note this is not the third Wednesday)  
Committee room 3 Civic Centre  
Speaker: Anne Reaney - Linkline**