



WOLVERHAMPTON OVER 50s FORUM
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Minutes of Over 50s Forum
Held on Wednesday 20th May 2009, 10am

Present: 35 members, Jean Fairclough (minutes), Rose Powell

Apologies: John Quarry, Tom Stringer, Eddie Grizzle, Reg Jones, Jenny Purshouse

Chairperson: Brad Purshouse

Brad welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced speakers Chris Elgerton and Amrit Jhumat. Maria O'Donohue, Commissioning Officer, Putting People First, introduced herself and gave a brief overview of her job role.

Speaker: Chris Elgerton and Amrit Jhumat

Bogus callers, also known as distraction burglars, try to trick their way into your home to steal your money and valuables while your attention is elsewhere. They do this by offering to do work such as roofing, tarmac or building work. Often the work is unnecessary, done to a poor standard and vastly overpriced. Most callers to your property will be genuine and mean you no harm, but bogus callers can often seem very plausible and will try to fool you.

A bogus trader is someone who comes to the door and tricks the householder into letting them in so that they can steal or otherwise persuade the householder to hand over money. They may pose as officials, for example from the water board or gas company, be trying to sell something or they might be seeking payment for doing a job such as roofing or paving.

An important thing to remember is that a reputable trader will rarely just turn up at your door uninvited and always be willing to call back at a more convenient time for yourself, they won't expect an on the spot decision. They will always leave as soon as they are asked to do so and will also present personal identification to confirm who they are and where they are from.

Bogus traders create fear of the consequences of not having the work done. They might have slick, professional leaflets or flyers will try to rush you into a decision by being persistent and persuasive. Remember that a reputable trader would not to rush you into a

decision, and wouldn't need an on the spot answer.

Distraction burglars are exactly the same as bogus callers/traders except there are two of them. Offenders may try to get into the home by distracting the householder at the front door whilst someone sneaks into the back. They also sometimes leave the door on the latch as they enter the property, and their accomplice follows them in.

If you ever do become a victim of doorstep crime there are people you can talk to, people who can help and people who will support you. If you know the bogus trader is still in the area (gone to a neighbour for example) you should ring 999 and tell the Police. You can speak to Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06 (cards will be given out at the end) or Age Concern on 01902 572075. Age Concern are excellent at dealing with these kinds of situations and have helped numerous doorstep crime victims in the past. You can also speak to City Direct, the Council's own contact centre on 01902 551155 and also your local neighbourhood partnership and/or area wardens. They are always available for help and advice.

- Make sure that your front door and back doors are locked. This will eliminate the possibility of distraction burglars getting into your home.
- Always use a door chain/bar when answering the front door. Remember that the front door is your barrier, if you stop bogus traders getting in then they can't con you out of your money. This is really important and cannot be stressed enough.
- Do not keep large sums of money in your home. The trader will be looking for evidence of this so use banks and don't hide money under your mattress. It isn't safe and could play into bogus caller's hands.
- Always check the traders I.D thoroughly. Do not just believe them when they say 'I am from the Council/Gas/Water company'. Remember that the Council will always send a letter first, we don't just turn up at your door.
- When checking the traders I.D check the telephone number in the Yellow Pages. Don't just ring the number on their card- it could be false or just divert to their colleagues mobile phone.
- Most important of all is this. The best way to stop bogus callers/traders is to not let them in. If they don't get into your home in the first place then they won't be able to con you out of your money, or hurt you physically, so DON'T LET THEM IN!.

There is also the Good Neighbour Scheme, issued by Wolverhampton Homes, Age Concern also has this scheme whereby callers to your home are directed to a neighbour on the list, who would then check ID and let you know that it is ok to talk to the caller.

Minutes of last Meeting

Agreed as true record by Roy Girdler and Seconded by Marjorie Wedge.

Matters Arising

Rose reminded members of the Older Peoples Partnership Board Consultation event which is taking place on Friday 19th June at the Novotel Hotel, invites have been sent out.

Chair's Remarks

Brad reported he attended Walsall Over 50s forum away day event, he stated that it was poorly supported, only about 11 people attended. Brad will forward a copy of results/report.

Treasurer's Report

Dave report that the account is standing at £2126.96, litter picking invoice will be taken into account when received.

Correspondence

Roy read letter regarding a Stakeholder Event on the National Carers Strategy, to be held on Friday 12 June 2009, Meeting Room 3, Third Floor, Civic Centre, 9:30am – 1pm, people can reserve a place by calling 555344/555494, asking for Liz or Rose.

Copies of the May/June Forum-2-Forum brochures were handed out.

Committee Reports

Health

At the annual meeting of the Bereavement Centre which was attended by 19 agencies it was reported that take up had increased from 63% to 72.5%. All the feedback about services had been positive. The government is going to adopt the Wolverhampton model of bereavement services nationwide, although it will not include all the services that are on offer in Wolverhampton.

Over the Christmas period New Cross took over the registration of deaths and made 26 appointments.

The amount of time between submitting an application for a Grant and the decision being made, has been reduced to 6 weeks. However, a large deposit is still required whilst the Grant application is being processed.

CRUSE has changed its telephone number to 01384 635599

Copies of 'When someone has died' were distributed.

Q: How can the costs of funerals be reduced?

A: Not easy even cardboard coffins cost the same as the cheapest wooden one (£495).

Q: What about Wills?

A: Bereavement Services include wills and probate but the papers can also be downloaded from the Internet. Amendments to Wills often mean that they are re-written rather than adding codicils but codicil forms can be obtained from WH Smiths or the Internet if you want to make minor changes. There are free Will services but you are often required to make a donation to a charity. Mr Rai advised that a Solicitor would make sure that all eventualities are covered in a Will if things are more complicated

Housing

A housing meeting will be held on Friday 22 May 2009, in Briefing Room 2, First Floor, Civic.

Environmental Committee Reports

Roy informed the Forum that a small group visited the Loxdale Canal site, and clean up with British Waterways; they took away about 40 bags of rubbish. They also met on Tuesday 19 May in Bilston Market to start off the litter picking, John Eccleston, Enforcement Officer, Environmental Services was also present. Roy stated that more litter pickers are needed, letters will be sent to members asking for their help, people can also put forward their areas for litter picking. The Hi-Vis vests are still to be delivered; Rose will speak to John Eccleston regarding these. Roy thanked all who participated in the litter picking exercise.

This was a very successful project and many volunteers from the Forum participated, many thanks to Elizabeth Smith who took photographs.

The programme now needs to be rolled across other areas of Wolverhampton and members were asked to nominate areas. Dana proposed that the Green Gym should link up with The Little Environmentalist Group based in Tettenhall Wood Community Association with a view to clearing parts of Tettenhall.

Any Other Business

Gina Parker informed the Forum that Blue Badge holders will no longer be sent renewal reminders in the future, there is also a 12-14 weeks waiting for renewal. This delay is due to a new computer system being set up which does not and will not have the reminder system built into the programme. The service has been transferred to the Neville Garratt Centre, any enquiries call 551285. It was stated that all people need to do is to follow the instructions which can be found in booklet they had when they first applied.

A Road Safety Meeting was held on Thursday 7 May regarding condition of the pavement/footpath but there was more emphasis placed on young people's safety than that of older peoples'. People were also concerned about skateboarders and rollerblades.

There were brief discussions around Google Eye and the security issues, an article appeared in the local papers regarding street maps.

**Date of next meeting is Wednesday 17 June 2009 at 10am,
Committee Room 3, Civic Centre.**

Speaker: Intergenerational Film to be shown