

Pensioners' Forum News

September to
October 2010

Introduction

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Pensioners' newsletter. The purpose of this is to update you with news about the activities of the Forum, local services and opportunities. We hope that it will be of interest to everyone, although some of the content is specifically aimed at older people. This edition mostly updates on discussions at our September meeting – at which we were also delighted to welcome back Sam and Christiana Owusu-Akuffo! Our next meeting being on 4th November 2pm – 4pm at the Guildhall. You can follow us on Facebook and share news between meetings too!

Updates from Forum meeting held in September 2010

Heritage Open Days 2010

Liz Percival and Tom Welsh were both thanked for their help. Liz had joined young volunteers to provide a welcome desk in the Guildhall – which dealt with over 1200 visitors in two days! Liz had also joined in the Bangra dancing as part of celebrating the Northampton Hindu Community Memories Exhibition shown for the first time that weekend. Tom had kindly stepped in at short notice to help Jtrails and meet unprecedented demand for a Jewish Heritage Trail walk. Joyce reported that events at Delapre Abbey had also been successful with many visitors attending from outside the Northamptonshire area.

Members of the Forum discussed about perhaps having fewer events during the days across the town so people have more time to see things. They also noted that every year the visitor numbers are increasing, with some people coming back to see different things each time.

New Byelaws Approved

The Council had responded to feedback from young people and others including this Forum about the issue of skateboarding: it had decided to make it illegal to skateboard in such a manner as to cause danger of give reasonable grounds for annoyance to other persons using the footway or carriageway to be prohibited. This would protect both pedestrians and skateboard users while also allowing skaters to use places when not causing a danger to themselves or others. Meanwhile the Councillors were continuing to work with young people to get a Skate Park for Northampton.

Northampton Older People's Health Forum

The Forum had responded positively to NHS and NCC requests to help them address interest the NHS had received from the public asking for an older people's health forum for Northampton.

Members of Northampton Pensioners Forum, 50+ Network and Pensioners Voice advised NHS and NCC about venue, what to include for 29th September and agreed to do radio interviews etc too. NHS would organise publicity, with every household getting information in 'Together Northamptonshire', the magazine which they said had generated lots of interest in having the forum. NHS would run the day with support from Forum volunteers. Maggie Lonergan from NCC said the next event would be on 1 December 2010.

Members of the Forum noted that NCC was now involved in work to respond to the NHS White Paper on NHS restructuring. It was agreed, to include a question and answer session on 29 September and that appropriate NHS and NCC offers attend to speak about the White Paper and help people understand what it's about.

Refuse Collection

For legal and commercially sensitive reasons it was not possible for NBC to provide information about the tendering process underway. Cllr Garlick assured that any further updates and information gathered would be passed on as appropriate at future meetings.

Healthy voices heard in Northampton

The March Issue of Together Northamptonshire prompted many over 50s to contact NHS Northamptonshire to ask for a regular health-focused event for older people in Northampton. In response to this, NHS Northamptonshire has teamed up with Northamptonshire Pensioners Voice, Northampton Pensioners Forum and Northampton Borough Council to launch The Northampton Older People's Forum, a quarterly event aimed at promoting health, wellbeing and independence for older people.

The first event takes place on Wednesday 29 September at the Northampton Guildhall from 12pm - 3pm and includes sessions on dementia, care and Northampton General Hospital along with an open house discussion. These sessions will also be presented with an opportunity to make your own tea, coffee and biscuits and take part in raffles and lucky draws. For more information contact Northamptonshire's very own Mr. 'Starfish' Member.

The other county Older People's Health Forums are taking place on the following dates over a year:

- Wednesday 23 October: Full Gospel Church, Rushden
- Wednesday 23 October: Queen Victoria Hall, Doncaster
- Tuesday 19 October: All Saints Church, Welby
- Wednesday 24 October: West Gifford Pavilion, Corby
- Thursday 21 October: Gore Market Hall, Kettering
- Friday 29 October: Stapleford Hall, Brackley

To express an interest in attending any of the forums, or for further information please contact NHS Northamptonshire on 03004 652744 or e-mail consultations@northants.nhs.uk

Doncaster Older People's Health Forum

World AIDS Day



Community groups are working hard with NBC and NCC to co-ordinate activities to highlight HIV and AIDS issues locally and globally for 1 December 2010. A ceremony would be held at the Guildhall at 12.30pm – 1pm with African drummers, a range of speakers from SOLAR, Age Concern and other local groups. There would be some singing, music, candle lighting and anyone who wished to speak or read a poem out would be able to do so.

A multicultural event for older people would be taking place in the Guildhall 12pm – 3pm organised by Age Concern.

Facts about the Over 50's and HIV/AIDS

- HIV infections among the over-50s have more than doubled in seven years.
- The number of new cases per year recorded in England, Wales and Northern Ireland rose from 299 to 710 between 2000 and 2007, research has shown.
- Half of the new cases identified were diagnosed late, increasing the risk of an early death from Aids.
- Adults aged 50 and over account for just 8% of all new HIV diagnoses
- Nearly half of older adults diagnosed between 2000 and 2007 were infected at age 50 or over and this highlights the importance of HIV testing - whatever your age
- The Health Protection Agency data shows there are more than 83,000 people in the UK living with HIV, a quarter of whom do not know they are infected.
- Using a condom with all new or casual partners is the surest way to ensure that people don't become infected with a serious sexually transmitted infection such as HIV/Aids

Equality Act 2010: New Rights and Responsibilities for Individuals and Groups Providing Services to the Public

Background: over the years laws about discrimination have been important to help make a fair society in Britain. But the laws have been complex and not always as effective as intended for stopping inequality between, say, men and women, disabled people and others etc. Carers and some other groups have not had as much protection as they need. The Equality Act tidies up the laws. It gives carers and everyone more rights. It aims to make things simpler. It still needs people to share about their experiences of using services but the emphasis will be on what difference services make, challenging the idea that equalities is only about "ticking boxes".

There was some interest from the Forum in knowing if the law would affect the amount of questions people would be asked with regards to their ethnicity, age and religious beliefs, as some people regarded it as unnecessary when applying for a number of different things, such as jobs.. It was noted that some questions will need to be asked to help ensure services are provided fairly and to check whether there are particular groups who need more help to access them. Council services would need to show they have considered what people have told them and data about the local population when making decisions about providing services. But the law wants to keep things in proportion – to ask for information only where this would be helpful and necessary.

At the moment people get asked questions but rarely get to find out why or how the information is used to help improve services and quality of life. Proposals for new ways councils and services provided for them require anonymised data and some other information to be available publically. This should help people understand council decisions and hold the council to account. It should also help charities, voluntary groups and private sector organisations who can use information to make bids, develop services etc e.g. for older people, disabled people etc.

Facebook, Itea and Biscuits and Older People's Increasing use of the internet

Most people in the UK use the internet - often as a means of communicating with friends and family and keeping in touch with relatives who may be living some distance away. Last year 1 million more older people in the UK became 'silver surfers'. Around 9 million adults still do not use the internet.

Some research has shown older people who do not use the internet now miss out on discounts and other benefits. For example, they can be more socially isolated than other people. They may be nervous of using computers or simply not realise what they are missing out.

The government is encouraging councils to post more information on the internet.

Age Concern and Age UK are encouraging everyone to help older people use the internet through their 'Itea and biscuits' campaign. There were a few places left on courses locally and those interested might like to attend the training event on the 16th October 2010. Age UK's Pledge asks anyone with a bit of computer know-how to use their skills to help coach others who had less understanding or confidence when using computers.

In recent years, several members of the Forum said they had learned to use mobile phones and computers, including the internet.

Forum members shared tips that had helped them to get confident with computers. For example, that Age Concern held a list of reasonably priced contractors; an 'Approved Supplier List' was understood to have been compiled by the County Council and Trading Standards and recommendations of a number of books were given and would most likely be available in local libraries. The books included the Babani series of 'Computing Books for the Older Generation' (www.babanibooks.com) which are available at bookshops including WHSmith.

Northampton Community Safety

A big campaign was currently underway which was encouraging people, especially those more vulnerable to think about the ways in which they can make themselves less likely to be a victim of crime.

This could be done in a number of ways such as:

- Consider routes when walking
- Try to stick to well lit streets
- Don't leave valuable goods on display
- Try not to go out unaccompanied at night

Bus Passes and Free Travel for Pensioners

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) was continuing to lobby Government to keep bus passes and to make them national. There was also a proposal that it double up as a rail card so that reductions on trains could also be had – the results of which would not be known until after the Budget – to be held on the 20th October 2010.

Royal and Derngate Theatre Trust

Cllr Garlick would invite a member of the Trust Board to address the Forum to see what might be done to help older people with concessions.

Got Old Video or Film? Free Help to Convert it to Play on Modern Machines

An archive of film about the Midlands is being made. Films can be stored in the archive in original and new format. You can get old film converted to new format so you can enjoy it at home again. Contact: Lucy Kerley, Curator Tel: 0116 252 5931 or email: lk99@le.ac.uk or tel/text: 07919 896505

Northampton Pensioners Forum on Facebook

Responding to the fact more older people are using the internet, including Facebook, and the ease of sharing information that way, a Facebook page has been set up which is free to join. The easy web address for the page is:

www.northampton.gov.uk/pensionersforumonfacebook


Forum attendance in September 2010 included:

Roger Rumsey (Co-Chair), Cllr David Garlick (NBC), Brian Nichols, Madeline Boys, Doreen Minney (Pensioner's Voice), Anne Mackay (Pensioner's Voice), Mike Hill (Pensioner's Voice), Joyce Smith, Christiana Owusu-Akuffo (Divine Prayer Society), Samuel Owusu-Akuffo (Divine Prayer Society), Barbara Isaac, Elizabeth Percival, Geoff Simms, Audrey Tayler, Jean Anderton, Hazel Tuttle, Harry Tuttle, J Smith, J Wright, Lindsey Ambrose (NBC), David Hewitt, Tom Welsh, Maggie Longergan (NCC), Mary Dyer-Atkins.

Have you got news, questions or thoughts you'd like to share?

To pass on information via the Pensioners' Forum please contact Lindsey Ambrose, NBC, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE

 email: lambrose@northampton.gov.uk

 01604 837566 or 0779 53 33 687

Would you like to join the Forum?

Membership is open and free. It enables you to receive information by email or post about meetings, consultations, events etc so you can be actively involved with the Council and dialogue about services.

To join please contact Democratic Services or Lindsey Ambrose.

Democratic Services

tel: 01604 837101 or 01604 837089 or 01604 837356

Email: nbrindley@northampton.gov.uk or egarratt@northampton.gov.uk

Lindsey Ambrose (m) 0779 53 33 687.

Email: lambrose@northampton.gov.uk

Or, write to us at: NBC, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE

Pensioners' Forum meetings coming up in 2010

Open to all.

Meetings are Thursdays from 2.00pm to 4.00pm at Northampton Guildhall:

4 Nov 2010

16 Dec 2010

Disabled access information:

www.northampton.gov.uk/disabledgo or contact the Guildhall Office on 01604 838400 or email:

guildhalloffice@northampton.gov.uk

More information about the Forum is at: www.northampton.gov.uk/pensionersforum
And www.northampton.gov.uk/pensionersforumonfacebook