

Pensioners' Forum News

November 2010

Introduction

Welcome to the November 2010 edition of our 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.

News further to the Pensioners' Forum meeting on 4 November 2010

Financial Change in Northampton Borough Council: Difficult Choices Consultation

Cllr Markham presented a report on behalf of the Leader of the Council. This outlined the national picture of growing debt, the Comprehensive Spending Review, the current budget of the council and the fact the budget is due to be cut through reduced Government grant.

It was expected finances to local government would be reduced by 28% over the next four years. Cllr Markham informed the group that this was only part of the picture and that the full impact of the spending review was not yet known.

The Forum noted that the Council had anticipated this level of cuts. It was now necessary for NBC to prioritise what services it provides and where cutbacks could be made and members of the Forum. People were asked to complete the survey form to indicate what they felt to be priorities for the council and to share and suggestions and ideas they had. This would help to inform the budget and planning decisions of the council for the coming year.

It was noted that further consultation on the Budget was due to take place and that the council hoped to find out more about the government grant and other aspects of its budget in December 2010.

Northampton Older People's Health Forum: Invitation: Friday 21 January 2011

Forum members have agreed two main items for discussion: the NHS White Paper and the Northants County Council 'You Choose' Budget Consultation (now entering its second stage).

The meeting is to be held in the Jeffery Room, Northampton Guildhall, Friday 21 Jan 2011 from 2pm to 4pm. All welcome. No need to book..

Disabled People's Forum: Invite: Assisted Transport Consultation and NBC Disabled Facilities Grants Update: 4 January 2011

Members of the Pensioners' Forum – and anyone else interested – are invited to join members of Northampton Disabled People's Forum on 4 January 2011 5.30pm – 8.00pm at Northampton Guildhall.

The two main agenda items are the County Council's consultation on providing help for people with getting around through its Assisted Transport Consultation. Also, an update from Northampton Borough Council's Housing team on progress with Disabled Facilities Grants (which are used to make adaptations to people's homes to help them live independently). All welcome. No booking necessary.



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Please note that this Forum is supported and funded by Northampton Borough Council. The Forum may work in partnership and collaboration with other community groups, councils and local services from time to time. The views expressed and decisions taken by the Forum are not necessarily those of Northampton Borough Council.

Northampton Older People's Health Forum: Review Discussion

The Forum reflected on the event in September 2010. It had received a few less people than established health forum meetings in other parts of the county. They also considered the impact of the NHS White Paper and that Primary Care Trust was having to implement transitional arrangements ahead of being replaced by GP consortia from 2012.

Questions the Forum considered:

Was the Health Forum informative?

Those who attended mostly felt it had been informative.

Was it useful?

There was disappointment with the publicity and low turn out. Having to book was reported to have put off some people from attending.

Should it continue?

It was suggested that it should be a simpler, smaller meeting, clear in purpose and better publicised. There was concern that there was a real need for people to have a say on NCC and NHS issues relating to health and social care given the changes happening at the moment. It was felt that this needed to be over and above the existing NBC-supported Northampton Pensioners' Forum.

It was decided to go for a date in January 2011. Some members of the Pensioners' Forum would meet with NHS and NCC representatives to plan the event and then report back to Pensioners' Forum on 16 December 2010.

Partnership Fund 2011-12: apply before midday on 14 January 2011

Local organisations are invited to apply for grants of at least £2,000 in 2011 for projects to help vulnerable people, actively engage people and provide community advice and guidance. Forms and information are available online at www.northampton.gov.uk/partnershipfund or tel: Joe Biskupski tel: 01604 837074. Help is available from the Volunteering Centre for applicants tel: 01604 637522.

Central Area Action Plan: Update further to consultation

Over recent years the Forum has been consulted from time to time about the future of the town centre and the Central Area Action plan's development.

The Council was now inviting people to look at the current plan during November and early December 2010. The plan has been formed on the basis of consultations done in recent years and is due to be submitted to the Government soon. There is still time for people to give feedback and suggestions. Contacts and opportunities for people to talk to planning officers and see the plans were identified.

Cllr Markham outlined the overall plan for the next 15 years. He explained that this was not a detailed plan, but a high level overview.

A number of forum members expressed concern that there should be more access for pedestrians and an improvement of accessibility to a number of places in and around the town centre.

Remembrance Day 2010

At the November Pensioners Forum meeting, the Forum members were invited to join the Mayor of Northampton, local councillors and others to pay their respects on Sunday 14 November 2010. The Remembrance Service would be at All Saints Church, after a Parade from the Market Square led by Northampton Pipe Band.

World AIDS Day 2010

Members of the Forum were invited to the ceremony, which has since been held at the Guildhall at 12.30pm – 1pm with a range of speakers from SOLAR, Age Concern and other local groups. A multicultural event followed organised by Age Concern. Despite the freezing weather there was a good turnout to the event.

Byelaws Consultation and Skate Park: Update to the Forum

The byelaws on the town centre had been updated. Taking account of feedback on skateboarding, some amendments had been made. It was noted that the Pensioners' Forum had raised concerns about lack of provision for skateboarders and that the Council had now approved £250,000 capital funding (money it has to reinvest in buildings) towards a skate park for Northampton.

Northampton Hindu Community Memories Exhibition

Older people who came to Northampton in the 1970s have gone on to make Northampton their home, to raise families, get involved in civic and public life and introduce the local community to the colourful, friendly Diwali celebrations. An exhibition featuring Diwali lanterns, musical instruments and the personal stories and memories of people of different ages in the Hindu community is free to view in the People's Gallery at Northampton Museum, Guildhall Road, until 24 Dec 2010 during its normal opening times.

Forum attendance in November 2010 included:

Roger Rumsey (Co-Chair), Cllr B Markham (NBC), Madeline Boys, Geoff Simms, Jean Anderton, Roy Darlow, John Wright (Pensioners' Voice) Harry Tuttle (Pensioners' Voice) Hazel Tuttle (Pensioners' Voice), Christiana Owusu-Akuffo (Divine Prayer Society), Samuel Owusu-Akuffo (Divine Prayer Society), David J Hewitt, Bridget Gibson (Link), Rob Goodman (NHS Northamptonshire), Liz Percival, Lindsey Ambrose (NBC), Sonja Noon (Northamptonshire County Council)

Apologies: Cllr Jane Hollis

Would you like to join the Forum?

Membership enables you to receive information by email or post about meetings, consultations, events etc so you can be actively involved with Northampton Borough Council and dialogue about services. To join please contact Lindsey Ambrose, the Forum's co-ordinator:
tel/text: 0779 53 33 687 or tel: 01604 837566
or email: lambrose@northampton.gov.uk

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

Pensioners' Forum agenda-style meetings

Open to all. Meetings are from 2pm to 4pm at Northampton Guildhall on:

- ✿ 16 December 2010
- ✿ 10 February 2011

Please let us know if you need agendas in large print or other particular format to meet your disability needs.

Disabled access information for the Guildhall:
www.northampton.gov.uk/disabledgo
or contact the Guildhall Office tel: 01604 838400 or
email: guildhalloffice@northampton.gov.uk

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. News may be posted by anyone at any time, including invitations to events, funding opportunities and opportunities to have your say on local and national consultations.

The easy web address for the Facebook page is:

www.northampton.gov.uk/pensionersforumonfacebook

This is in addition to the Forums information on the NBC web pages at www.northampton.gov.uk/forums

