

## **Northampton Borough Council**

### **Northampton Pensioners' Forum**

**Thursday, 21 March 2013**

**In attendance:** Councillor Oldham (Chair) Roger Rumsey (Co-Chair) Brian Nichols, Ann Timson, Mike Hill, Jacqueline Forrest-Smith, Madeline Boys, John Rawlings, Hazel Tuttle, Harry Tuttle, Jean Anderton, Mary Dyer-Atkins, Tony Mallard

#### **1. WELCOMES AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and members of the forum took the opportunity to introduce themselves.

#### **2. APOLOGIES FROM PEOPLE WHO CAN'T MAKE IT TO THE MEETING**

Apologies were received from Joyce Smith and David Hewitt. An apology was noted from the previous meeting from Mary Dyer-Atkins.

#### **3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting were agreed by the Chair following an amendment to the previous minutes as follows:

Community News Exchange – Northampton Borough Council would be transferring the management of some local Community Centres to community organisations.

#### **4. PENSIONERS' FORUM - WORK PLANNING FOR 2013/14**

Members of the forum discussed the topics that they would like discussing at future meetings. The general consensus was that consideration needed to be given to changes in the management of some community centres. The Chair asked that the forum members bring in any relevant information relating to the matter to the next meeting, to address issues with regards to increase in chargeable activities.

Councillor Oldham commented that he would invite the responsible Cabinet Member – Cllr Eldred, to the next forum meeting to elaborate on the changes and proposed changes to the management of local community centres.

Matthew Steele (Benefits and Fraud Manager) updated the forum about the main changes of the Welfare Reform Act. It was reported that the changes would come into effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 onwards. The main change that would affect people was that of the 'bedroom tax'. It was explained that changes to the welfare system meant that people occupying properties, and in receipt of benefits, where they had a spare room would be subject to a reduction of benefits of 14% for a single room and 25% for two or more. It was noted that there were a number of protections in place including:

- Pensioners
- Those in supported accommodation
- Those residing in boats or caravans

- Shared ownership properties

A number of options would be available to those who did not want to pay the shortfall which was considered by the forum.

Councillor Oldham expressed his concern about Universal Credit system and the proposed affects that this would have on people in receipt of housing benefit payments. It was suggested that someone from the Finance department be invited to a future meeting. A suggestion was also made for the Cabinet Member for Housing to attend a future forum meeting.

### **PENSIONERS FORUM – Work Planning 2013/14**

The Forum members discussed the topics which they would like further information on at future meetings. It was agreed that the following areas be discussed to include:

#### **Community Centres**

- Changes to management of Community Centre

#### **Health Service and Health Provisions**

- Liverpool Health Pathway
- Northampton General Hospital
- East Midlands Ambulance Service

#### **Housing**

- Housing Stock Transfer
- Sheltered Housing

#### **Transport**

- Traffic flows in town centres
- Changes to Bus Timetables
- Bus Station re-development and subsequent road closures
- Railway Station

## **5. PENSIONERS' FORUM - MEETING DATES FOR 2013/14**

### **Meeting dates for 2013/14**

Future meeting dates for the forum were agreed to be as follows:

Thursday 6 June 2013

Thursday 12 September 2013

Thursday 31 October 2013

Thursday 12 December 2013

Thursday 6 February 2014

Thursday 20 March 2014

Thursday 5 June 2014

It was **agreed** that Councillor Eldred be invited to the meeting, to be held on the 6th June 2013 to discuss changes, and proposed changes to the management of Community Centres.

It was also **agreed** that a representative from Liverpool Care Pathway be invited the meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

#### **6. COMMUNITY NEWS EXCHANGE**

None

#### **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members of the Pensioners Forum were urged to keep abreast of any news which may affect them, specifically relating to a think tanks suggestion that pensions be means-tested.

#### **8. DATE AND VENUES OF FUTURE FORUM MEETINGS**

The Date of the next meeting would be the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013

The meeting concluded at 3.31pm