

Harrogate District



**Minutes of the Inaugural Annual General Meeting
held at The Council Chambers, Harrogate Borough Council Offices,
Crescent Gardens Harrogate, HG1 2SG
on 21st March 2013**

The meeting started with a minute silence for Christine Dobson, who sadly passed away on 18th March 2013. Christine was one of the founding members of the group and its success is due in part to her enthusiasm and commitment.

1. Welcome and introductions

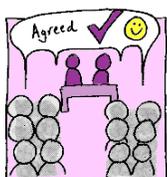
Anthony Kerr, Acting Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress Councillor Ian and Mrs Jean Galloway; County Councillor Shelagh Marshall; Councillor Bernard Bateman; Alex Bird, Chief Officer of North Yorkshire Age UK and Karen Weaver, Chief Executive of Harrogate & District Council for Voluntary Service.

2. Adoption of Constitution

Anthony introduced the new constitution that established the Harrogate District Over 50s Forum (HDOFF). He drew the meeting's attention to the underpinning principles of the Forum. That older people:

- Have a positive contribution to make to community life;
- Are recognised and valued for their achievements and responsibilities;
- Have a voice and seek to use this to influence the policies and services that affect them.

The logo consists of a red rectangular box containing the text 'Voice of Experience' in white. 'Voice' is on the top line, 'of' is in the middle, and 'Experience' is on the bottom line.



Adoption of the Constitution was proposed by the Chair and was unanimously agreed.

3. Election of members to the Management Committee

The names of people who put themselves up for election were read out:

1. Susan Hobbs
2. Ann Hill
3. Anthony Kerr
4. Trevor Stearn
5. Rose Stearn
6. Joan Johnson
7. Brenda Dixon
8. Christine Schofield
9. Michael Ellenor
10. Josie Chapman
11. John Dorman
12. Sylvia Wittman.



Sylvia Wittmann proposed acceptance, seconded by Audrie Bickerdike

4. Report of Activities of the Forum to date



Christine Boxall and Dorothy Hawkins were thanked for their contribution to the report which showed how much work the Forum had done since the launch in July 2012.

North Yorkshire Forum for Older People (NYFfOP) the Forum funders have congratulated the Forum and said that it had come a long way in a short time.

5. Financial Report



A Financial Report was presented to the AGM. Christine said that a grant of £6000 per year had been given to Harrogate Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) from North Yorkshire County Council via NYFfOP to support the development of the Forum and explained that the majority of the grant was for staffing and that the meeting and other costs of the Forum had been very modest. This grant was ring fenced for CVS. However Ann Hill said that the Forum would receive, along with other Forums in North Yorkshire, £1000 into its new bank account in mid-April.

Anthony said that the Forum is not charging for membership and any income would be generated by grants and by activities.

Alex Bird said that partnership working could be one way of the Forum generating an income. She mentioned the Winter Warmer event held in Knaresborough in March which was a partnership event between Age UK and the Forum generated an income for the Forum.

6. Call for ideas for activities and people who are interested in joining a Social Events Group.



There was discussion about how the Forum could link in with other organisations that are providing social and interest based activities, as well as on areas of joint concern.

- John Harris mentioned that the Friends of Harrogate Theatre has 525 members and activities are open to non members.
- There was general agreement for the Forum to liaise with other bodies and publicise events to forum members.
- John said that in celebration of the 110 anniversary of the opening of the Royal Hall there was an event on the 27th May from 10-4pm and it may be possible for the Forum to have a stand.
- There was some discussion about having a presence at the Great Yorkshire Show or there are organisations, for example Age UK who could be approached about publicising Forum literature.
- Joan Johnson raised the idea of advertising on the little red bus.
- The Deputy Mayor said that the Community Chest had £30,000 which organisations could bid for and suggested the Forum talk to Karen about how to make an application. He wished the Forum well, and he and his wife were thanked for their support over the year.
- Other ideas for activities included a walking group and a monthly luncheon club and a number of people took the opportunity to fill in the paper questionnaire asking for ideas.
- Trevor Stearn said that the Forum needed a Social Committee to get activities going.
- Jane Malster suggested that the Forum find out what activities are already available and set up its own web site.
- Karen said that Harrogate CVS run a free social media surgery and people can get in touch if they are interested in coming along.
- Brenda Dixon emphasized that the Forum was for the whole of the Harrogate District. There was some discussion about the best way to engage with other areas. The idea of regional representation on the management committee was discussed. It was also suggested that the Forum connect up with existing older people's groups.



Councillor Bernard Bateman gave his wholehearted support to the Forum and said that he was impressed that it had got so far so quickly. He counselled the Forum not to duplicate areas of work and said that he would support the Forum as the voice for older people in the District. He talked about some of the issues facing people living in rural areas and mooted the idea for a North Yorkshire older people's day.

As it was Councillor Bernard Bateman's birthday, Rose Stearn had baked a lovely cake and everyone sang happy birthday!



7. Any Other Business

Following the formal AGM a Question Time style question and answer session with Councillors Bateman and Marshall and Karen Weaver raised many of the issues that are faced by older people including isolation and loneliness, access to transport, lack of internet access and access to information.



Other key themes that emerged included:

- Connecting with other organisations and with what is already happening and resources already in place. For example Harrogate Spa Ladies organise trips and there may be a possibility of spare seats for Forum members.
- Changes in the NHS and Public Health and areas that the Forum can become involved in or influence.
- The importance of feeding into the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which feeds into the Health and Well Being Strategy, which in turn is managed by the Health and Well Being Board which comes into effect in April. Alex Bird is currently on the Board and the Forum can feed in things through her. She is also the voluntary sector representative on the Overview and Scrutiny committee.
- Role of the Forum. It was agreed that the Forum acts as one voice speaking for older people who are not already involved in other organisations. The two umbrella organisations in North Yorkshire are NYFfOP and NYCC Older People's Partnership Board. The Forum currently has two representatives on each, and there is a vacancy for a third representative.



There was a debate about the age range of the Forum. Many felt that people in their 50s were too young to be described as older people, and that people's needs, interests, issues and aspirations change at different life stages and age. Alex advised the meeting that Age UK can offer some support in the form of information and that it was possible for the Forum to register as a Friend as many Forums across the country have done.

Councillor Bateman and Marshall talked about the role of the Older People's Champion which was set up at the end of the 1990's; each District Council in the Country should have a champion. C.Councillor Marshall said that there is a job description and each year she presents an annual report of her activities. As well as being our local Champion Councillor Bateman is the Chair of Age UK North Yorkshire.



House of Lords
Select Committee
on Public Service
and Demographic
Change - report
Ready for Ageing?

Karen drew the meeting's attention to the recently published report by the Committee on Public Service & Demographic Change "Ready for Ageing" which warns that the government and society are underprepared for ageing. The report identifies how England will see a 51% rise in those aged 65+ and 101% increase in those aged 85+ from 2010 to 2030.

There was general agreement that one size does not fit all and the important thing is to get people involved and decide on priorities. It was stressed by the panel that the forum is an independent organisation and should make its own decisions about how it wanted to run.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the panel members.

Date and venue of next Forum meetings

Thursday 16th May 2013 from 2.00p.m. to 4.00p.m. at St Peters Church in Harrogate.

Come along and find out about the changes to the way that the Health Services are commissioned and scrutinized.

Find out about the new NHS 111 phone number which is being introduced for when you need to get help fast.