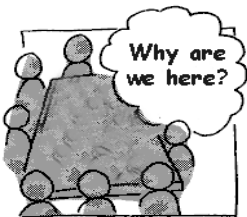

Notes from the Forum meeting 16 January 2013 held at St Peter's Church

Trevor Stearn our Chair for the day welcomed everyone who had come out on such a cold and foggy day and gave us all a chance to introduce ourselves to the people we were sitting with.

Forum Aims

Christine Boxall reminded us how the Forum came together at a launch last year at Cedar Court. Ann Hill and Anthony Kerr gave a recap of the purpose of the Forum and our key aims.



The purpose of the Forum is to provide a means for older people in the Harrogate District who are over 50 to come together and consider the issues both locally and nationally that affect their lives and to have a voice and influence the policies and services that affect them.

The Forum is an independent voluntary body run by older people in Harrogate District for older people in Harrogate District. It is working to benefit all older people in the District and it will do this:

- By valuing older people and promoting a positive attitude to aging.
- Ensuring older peoples involvement in decision and policy making.
- Presenting the views of older people in the Harrogate District to decision makers and service providers both locally and nationally.
- Ensuring that Older People's views are represented at the North Yorkshire Older People's Partnership Board and the North Yorkshire Forum for Older People.



- Keeping people informed of local issues as well as services and opportunities available to older people in the District.
- Identify any gaps in existing services and take appropriate action.
- Ensuring that older people who feel excluded because of isolation & loneliness, low incomes or limited access to transport have equal access to membership of the Forum.
- Ensuring that people have a chance to get out and meet new people, talk about and listen to things that are important to them, as well as socialise.

Staying Warm and Healthy this winter



Denise Hall from Hotspots gave a talk about the scheme and energy efficiency. Hotspots is a scheme which brings together local partner organisations who give information on home insulation and heating grants, advice on claiming benefits and conduct fire safety checks. Help is available from the Yorkshire Energy Partnership on 01904 545020 or email advice@energypartnership.org.uk.

Denise briefly mentioned The Green Deal which is an offer for people to insulate their homes from the cold, and their wallets from rising energy prices. You can get free and impartial advice about the Green Deal from the Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234.

Alex Bird from Age UK gave a presentation on staying warm and healthy and how Age UK can help to support older people. She said that over 26,000 people die due to colder weather in the UK and many older people worry about how they can meet the cost of food and heating. She explained that North Yorkshire County Council have a budget of £148,000 and are



working with partners across the county to provide information, advice, and events to raise awareness and give practical help and make sure that people have the benefits that they are entitled to.

Alex works closely with the new Clinical Commissioning Group to flag up key issues and influence their work with views of older people locally and is happy to pass on views of the Forum.

Alex highlighted a number of leaflets, 'Winter Wrapped up' which is a guide to keeping well and staying warm in winter. It has a thermometer inside the brochure to help monitor room temperature and suggestions for the ideal temperature for living room and bedroom. Other leaflets



included a checklist of staying warm, healthy, being prepared with enough food in the house and other useful tips. There is information on being a good neighbour and clearing the snow for others as well as finding a trustworthy trader for small household repairs. Harrogate Home Improvement Agency was highlighted as a reliable help for older and disabled people, contact them on 01423 503838. Help at Home is another voluntary agency who also provides help and they can be contacted on 01423 813096. Age UK had delivered 50 food parcels before Christmas and has £1,000 worth of dry goods from Waitrose for emergency food parcels.



Alex mentioned other services that Age UK provided including a telephone befriending and Secretary Service tailored to the needs of individuals to combat isolation and loneliness. She also said that there is a working partnership with Harrogate football club to set up a walking group for older men who are a hard to reach group of people.

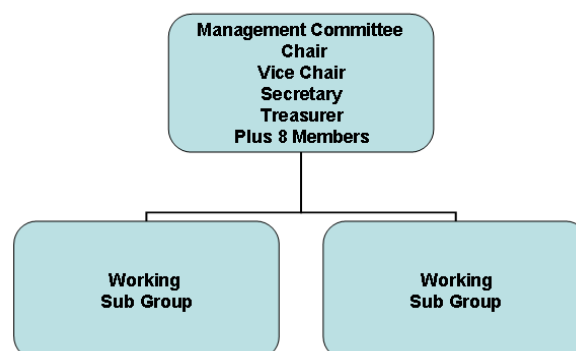
Grants of £250 to Support Winter Weather Agents Scheme in North Yorkshire

Rural Action Yorkshire is able to support 20 rural communities to set up their own Winter Weather Agent Scheme tailored to the needs of their residents. The support includes development time from a member of RAY staff, training on how to access other support from North Yorkshire County Council (e.g. emergency heaters, minor repairs, winter warm packs), links to wider emergency planning and small grants of up to £250 for equipment to keep your community safe this winter. Telephone - 0845 3130270.

Thinking about our AGM - Annual General Meeting

The AGM will take place on **21 March from 1.30 - 3.30 pm at Harrogate Borough Council Chamber at Crescent Gardens**. It will be the opportunity for you to elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer for the Forum. They will form the Forum Management Committee with up to 8 other interested members. A lot of the work of the Forum will be done by working sub groups who will look at specific items such as social activities and current issues.

Harrogate District Older Peoples Forum Structure



To be considered for these positions on the Forum Management Committee please give your details to Christine Boxall, Carer's Time Off, Community House, 46-50 East Parade, Harrogate HG1 5RR, telephone number: 01423 561061.

Supporting people who are bereaved

There is a new project called Touchstones which aims to help people who are newly bereaved.



When a person loses a partner they lose a companion and someone who they have shared daily tasks with. The project aims to develop practical new skills to help to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. These skills include, cooking, managing a budget, computers and gardening to name a few.

They will also hold coffee club meetings to enable new friendships to be made.

Commencing on Friday 8 March, 10.30 - 12.00 noon and then weekly at Montpellier Court, Cold Bath Road, Harrogate, HG2 0NL - for further information contact Wendy Holt on 07590458850.

Report back from representatives and local news

Members of the OPF Steering Group, Ann & Anthony, said they raised the idea of reinstating an older persons conference at the North Yorkshire Forum for Older People but unfortunately they did not get an agreement in principle as the Forum is still reviewing its strategy and will look at the idea at a later date. Anthony said that most of the other Forums were doing the same as us and concentrating on winter warmth and wellbeing.

Little Red Bus

Cuts in public spending, reduced bus services and tightening criteria for statutory agencies



have meant it is increasingly difficult for some people to access work, social care, doctors hospitals school, training, sports and shopping particularly in rural areas. Little Red Bus provides a Travel Club with a range of outings available for 5 people or more.

Please contact Lyn@littleredbus.co.uk or Lyn Costelloe Unit 4 Saltergate Business Park, Burley Bank Rd HG3 2BX, Telephone 01423 724550

Singing Group

St Peters Church has a singing group for Older People that meets up once a month. The next meeting of this group is 13 February 2013 at 2pm.



Patchwork & Quilting



Joan Johnson is a keen patchwork and quilting enthusiast and is happy to help anyone interested in this craft.

Simplify NYCC Website

Trevor Stearn asked the group if he could take forward the idea of simplifying the NYCC website to make it easier to access information. Trevor is happy to take forward any other suggestions. Contact Trevor on access10@sky.com.

Energy Champions

NEA is the National Energy Action charity and in partnership with Age UK is working on a three year project which aims to involve older people in delivering affordable warmth projects across north Yorkshire. Ann Hill has just started training as one of 10 older volunteers to champion the cause of affordable warmth.

Forum Events

There are two forum social events taking place in February:

14 February, 2-4pm at the Dower House, Knaresborough

28 February, 2-4pm at Grove House, Skipton Road, Harrogate

A Winter Warmth & Wellbeing event will also be held on **7 March** at [the Bridge Coffee Bar, Gracious Street, Knaresborough](#) from **2.30 – 4.30 pm**. Come along for a free cake and a cuppa and help us think about what we have learned so far from this winter and find out more about how you can keep warm and well for the rest of this winter as well as being prepared for the next one! Pass it on to anyone you know who might be interested in coming along.

A vote of thanks was given to Rose Stearn for the delicious cakes she's baked.



Forum Name Change

The new name of the group is:

Harrogate and District over Fifties Forum.

**DON'T FORGET THE AGM ON 21ST MARCH FROM 1.30 – 3.30 PM
AT HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CRESCENT GARDENS, HG1 2SG**