

Brighton & Hove
Older People's Council



Annual Report

2010-11



Supported by



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Introduction

This year has been a transition year for the OPC where the old members gave way to the new. It was the final year of the old administration, and work focussed on paving the way to the elections in June. As well as finalising long term projects, the group also had to publicise the forthcoming elections and work hard to generate the interest needed to bring in fresh candidates, especially women. The work paid off as the current OPC membership has two female members and represents a broader ethnic mix as well as a much wider age range.

Our Mission and Vision

We are elected to serve older people. We work to ensure that all older people in Brighton & Hove are treated with respect and dignity and have access to services, support and the opportunity to lead a fulfilling life. We are working to create a City where:



- The contribution of all older people is acknowledged and valued
- The needs of older people are recognised and met
- Older people are involved in making decisions that affect their daily lives and the communities in which they live.



Chair's Foreword

In looking back over the past year there are so many people to thank for their input and support for the city's Older People's Council.



In this election year I should start by thanking those in Electoral Services for organising the election in June with a good turnout in these areas where there was a contest. Next time – in 2015 we would like to see candidates (60 plus) in all nine divisions competing for votes – on a non party political basis.

As is known we are an independent council but supported administratively by the officers of the city council. Huge thanks are due to the Adult Social Care division for the many tasks taken on our behalf, especially since we will shortly be moving to another arm of the network, namely the Scrutiny Team. This makes a lot of sense since we see ourselves as something of a critical friend of the council and have a role of scrutinising policy and implementation.

Following the election we said goodbye to several valued friends and colleagues – Jim Buttimer, Bob Gunnell, Ed Cruickshank-Robb, and John Barry. We are grateful to John for contributing a review article to this publication and all four are sorely missed. Our thanks too for Mary Mears, former leader of the council, for meeting us on a quarterly basis and to John Barradell, Chief Executive of the council, for his interest in our work.

The city is well served by representative organisations for older people and we work cooperatively with Age Concern (Age UK) and Pensioner Action. We are also grateful to the radio programme "Grey Matters" for giving us the opportunity to give a monthly update on our progress. I am sure I have omitted thanks to many others who have supported us over the last year. We will try to fulfil the expectations of those who elected us.

Jack Hazelgrove
Chair (Hollingdean & Stanmer and Moulsecoomb & Bevendean)

Ten Older People

Listening

Acting

Making a Difference

Members' Profiles

Jack Hazelgrove (Chair)

Hollingdean & Stanmer and
Moulsecoomb & Bevendean

Over the coming year I will continue to concentrate my attention to health matters in old age. I will continue my Co-opted membership of the Council's Health & Overview Scrutiny Committee which meets with major players from the NHS Trusts.

I will maintain my involvement in the LINK especially through the Mental Health Action group. I will work with Age Concern (soon to be Age UK) and Brighton University on research findings about wellbeing and older people.

At grass roots level I attend the patients group of my local surgery (Park Crescent) in its splendidly converted former pub building. Like the rest of us I will try to make some sense out of the Government's attempt at a major restructuring of the NHS – though I have to say with a measure of scepticism about their plans.

Finally, I will make full use of the free bus pass. Long may it continue!

Francis Tonks (Vice-Chair)

Hanover & Elm Grove,
Preston
Park and
St Peter's &
North Laine



For the past year, I have been Vice – Chair of the Older People's Council, and it has been a busy year. We have had a series of public meetings and we

concentrated on health, transport and safety issues.

I attend the Brighton and Hove City Council's Community Safety Forum, where we meet Councillors, Police and Fire Chiefs. I am also a member of LINK (soon to be Healthwatch), serve on its committee and the Mental Health Group. I also write articles for 'The Pensioner' magazine.

After the recent election to the OPC I believe we have a new Council that includes experienced members and newcomers in our continuing campaign. We have had good support from the city's administration and hope to maintain that partnership in increasingly difficult times

Mike Bojczuk (Secretary) Central Hove and Westbourne



I was elected to the OPC in July and have since been elected Secretary of the Council, taking over from John Barry who had been doing an excellent job. As well as responsibility for communications within the Council, I want to extend this and make the general population more aware of us and the work we do. I hope to use and expand the OPC website, Grey Matters radio, and put on events to bring older people together and to make our voices noticed and responded to.

I work full time, but still have the energy and enthusiasm to contribute to issues surrounding health, transport, residential care and community safety. We're a large group but often a disparate and lonely one. I would like to bring us together, publicising what

we think and remind others that older people have an important voice in the community.

**Colin Carden
(Treasurer)**

Woodingdean

Over the last two years I have been involved with the Older People's Housing and Support Working Group, contributing to a complete overview of older people's needs being carried out by the City Council. The papers from this review are available at local libraries. I also represent the OPC at Board Meetings of Age Concern Brighton Hove & Portslade, attend the Housing Management Consultative Committee, and meetings of the Community Safety Forum.



continue therefore to attend such organisations as PAVA (Practitioners Alliance Against Abuse of Vulnerable Adults) so that I can make aware the effective action that can be taken on behalf of the abused elderly and of the elderly generally.

Last year I joined the Police Independent Advisory Group which monitors public response to police action, to put forward the point of view of an older person. I also remain Chair of the Portslade Local Action Team, a police liaison group, and Chairman of the Hove based Bluebird Society for the Disabled. In these capacities I am made fully aware of the fears and difficulties facing older people today and I look forward to serving another four years with the OPC.

Harry Steer MBE

North Portslade,
South Portslade
and Wish

During the recent OPC elections, I was most gratified to be returned with a majority of over a thousand votes! This is my third term with the Older Peoples' Council which makes me the longest serving member, and I hope that my experience will contribute to the stability and effectiveness of our organisation. My one regret is that other authorities have not set up similar representative bodies and that Brighton & Hove remains unique in this respect. I am amazed that the idea of the OPC has not spread despite our having attended meetings elsewhere explaining what we do, and having other representatives visit us. I shall



Val Brown

(Hangleton & Knoll,
and Hove Park)

I have lived in Hove for 10 years and am looking forward to supporting the work of the Older Peoples Council. It is important to me that the rights, demands and choices of our older citizens will always be heard loudly, and that lifetime experiences are visibly valued. In particular I believe that the social and cultural aspirations of all our senior taxpayers should be flagged up as continuing key concerns.

I am interested in local and family history and believe that the enormous wealth of Brighton and Hove's history and heritage, should be safely preserved for the future and easy access for older citizens provided. I like my bus pass: I like clean streets and prefer bicycles that stay on the roads. **Continued overleaf.**



Members' Profiles Cont.

I dislike noise and have long ceased to be a supporter of any particular political party. I believe that older people, of all diversities, should have a voice: a voice loud and clear, that will be heard.

John Eyles

(Brunswick & Adelaide, Goldsmid and Regency)



I have made contact with many groups and projects related to older people's welfare, including the Vallance Group and with the Brunswick Older People's Project. I have sat on Scrutiny Panels for community safety. A spin-off has been working on the NHS report on alcohol and the older person. I have taken up concerns with road safety and pavement obstructions, attended meetings on new NHS osteoporosis equipment and treatments, and been invited to comment on cycling safety. I attended the Council's Core Strategy Open Day. I am part of the Dignity Panel and was involved with the Dignity Day and April Falls Day events (having just fallen myself, this was quite apt!). An OPC visit to the Council waste disposal plant was very useful, highlighting some of the problems relating to re-cycling within the city.

Marina Murphy

(Rottingdean Coastal, co-opted)



As a newly co-opted member of the OPC, I look forward with enthusiasm to making my contribution over the next four years. The work for me is about Brighton and Hove as a place where older people have a strong voice and are proactively influencing policy decisions that contribute to their well-being.

In addition to OPC stated commitments, I have a special interest in promoting the health, happiness and social value of older people in the city. I intend to work collaboratively with organisations, groups and policy decision makers on strategies aimed at reducing health inequalities and the social exclusion of older people.

Coming from a personnel development and business education background, I aim to maintain my focus on people and education as a director of Grey Matters, the local radio station for older people. Get involved with the work of the OPC, together we can enhance the value of our contribution in making Brighton a model city for older people.

Colin Vincent

(Patcham and Withdean)



Elected (Unopposed) in July I've attended my first two OPC meetings and have rapidly developed an appreciation of the extent of the work carried out by the past and re-elected members in representing and promoting the interests of the older citizens of

Brighton & Hove across a range of issues which fall within the responsibilities of the City Council. It is my intention to be as fully involved as possible to the development of the OPCs role within the community and the local authority's structures.

Each OPC member is able to specify an area of particular though not exclusive interest such as Health, Housing, Transport, Culture, Recreation & Lifelong Learning, my choice is Social Care, an issue of primary concern to the elderly and those approaching that period of their life everywhere.

I look forward to utilising my life experiences through work in the private, public and voluntary sectors by contributing to the advancement of the interests of the elderly citizens of Brighton & Hove and in particular those who reside in Patcham & Withdean.

Peter Terry
(East Brighton and
Queens Park)



Since moving to Bristol Estate in 2003, I have been involved in running a social club as chairman and a garden club. I helped to organise day trips out and to raise money for the club. I would like the OPC to highlight transport difficulties that older people experience especially in keeping doctors and hospital appointments. I have recently retired and I feel that I understand and appreciate the needs of older people in Brighton and Hove. I feel very strongly that transport such as buses meet the needs of older people on low incomes, and on hilly areas of Brighton and Hove such as Bristol Estate and Mile Oak.

OPC Commitments

Commitment One:

We will listen to older people in the City and work closely with other local older people's groups and organisations

Commitment Two:

We will publicise our work through meetings, and the local press and media.

Commitment Three:

We will monitor the City Council, local health trusts and other providers of goods and services by making sure that we are represented on the appropriate committees and forums.

Commitment Four:

We will challenge disadvantage experienced by older people by being watchful to ensure that all older people, regardless of race, creed, sexuality or ability, are given the same access to opportunity as every other member of society and are not discriminated against.

Commitment Five:

We will highlight goods, services and opportunities that promote dignity and support older people to live independent lives where they want to.

Commitment Six:

We will promote the Human and Civil Rights of Older People by encouraging the provision and maintenance of a physical and social environment that enables older people to live productive and fulfilling lives.

Reflections on the work of the OPC 2007-11



John Barry, OPC retired secretary

Our Constitution tells us that the OPC was set up to inform the policy and decision-making of the City Council on matters that impact upon the quality of life and the opportunities available for older people living in the area. The OPC has therefore, over its last term of office, devoted much of its energies to listening to the concerns of older people, monitoring the work of the City Council and other service providers, and challenging disadvantages experienced by older people and promoted their rights. During the last administration the OPC decided to focus part of its efforts upon six areas of concern for many local older people: public seating, public toilets, public transport, pavement safety, waste disposal (especially green waste) and social care

In one sense our achievements in all these areas have been limited – there is rarely enough money for the City Council to do all that you want – but progress has been made, and the OPC now regularly contributes to the development of city-wide policies and initiatives which affect older people. Councillors and officers have actively

sought our views and advice about tackling problems or developing new or better services; areas such as local transport and housing for older people, community safety, health and social care, and the Dignity Board and the Waste Advisory Group come readily to mind. We see all relevant Overview and Scrutiny agendas. And I feel that the OPC's voice has gained authority largely because of our engagement with local community groups and with colleagues in the voluntary sector

We have been involved in a campaign jointly with the LINK and the Federation of Disabled People for more and better public toilet facilities; we took part in the consultations on the redevelopment of both The Level, and the Royal Sussex County Hospital. Submissions have been made to the Sustainable City Strategy, we have contributed to planning for mental health services, and were involved in the Core Strategy Open Day. We have produced a regular radio programme for older people; shared in organising the annual Older People's Day (when it was still funded), monitored council planning work as it affects public amenities such as church halls and residential care; and raised with the government housing minister the plight of the many leaseholders in the City

When crises have arisen, we have acted promptly: we have sought support for residents in local Southern Cross care homes; we challenged the Council's performance during severe winter weather; and we have pursued elder abuse cases in the local health service and supported government action to protect older people from excessive rises in fuel and energy costs. On the question of the funding of social care for an ageing population,

we sent detailed submissions on the government Green Paper in 2009 and to the Dilnot Commission in 2011

These actions represent only a part of what the OPC undertakes, but all members report a problem, in spite of our attendance at many community groups and forums, with keeping in touch with our electorate to hear what they say and to explain what we are doing. And a further regular challenge is to encourage older people to register to vote for their OPC, and also to stimulate interested voters to stand for election to the OPC every four years: there is always a need for new people with ideas and the enthusiasm to work on behalf of their fellow older citizens

What we have done:

Members of the OPC attend or are members of the following committees, forums, groups and organisations;

City Council Committees and Forums

Planning and Development Sub-Committee
Housing Committee
Environment Committee
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Equalities Forum
Disabled Access Action Group
Sheltered Housing Action Group
Local Area Agreement Project Management Group
Community Safety Forum

Other Community Groups

Older Peoples Strategic Housing Group
LINK – MHAG (Mental Health)
Central Sussex Bus Users Group
Age UK
Brighton University Research Group
The Level Working Group
St. Nicholas Green Spaces Association
Bristol Estate C.A.

Whitehawk & Manor Farm Crime Prevention Forum
Kempton Community Safety Action Group
Waste Advisory Group
Cityclean Assisted Waste Collection Project
Portland Road and Clarendon Forum
Portslade Local Action Team
Bluebird Society for the Disabled
Police Independent Advisory Group
Hangleton & Knoll 50+ Steering Group
PAVA (Practitioners Alliance Against Abuse of Vulnerable Adults)

OPC Elections July 2011

During May and June, members of the Older People's Council publicised the OPC Election and sought to attract eligible candidates to stand for election in the nine zones across Brighton & Hove. Over 4,000 leaflets were distributed to city libraries, the Town Halls, to sheltered accommodation schemes, and to community and voluntary sector venues. Articles were also published in City News, and the Argus.

The emphasis of the publicity was to encourage:

- older people in the city to register to vote for their Older People's Council;
- older people to vote in the election for the OPC;
- candidates to put themselves forward for election to the OPC.

In spite of the hard work to promote the election and to encourage participation, opposing candidates came forward in only two of the nine electoral zones. Elections, therefore, were held in (North Portslade, South Portslade and Wish) and (East Brighton and Queen's Park). The successful candidates in the respective zones were Harold Steer and Peter Terry.

Continued overleaf.

OPC Elections July 2011 continued.

Our thanks and commiserations must also go to Ronald Gurney, John Kapp, and Marina Murphy, the defeated candidates who showed a great commitment to our city in standing.

In each of the remaining seven zones across the city, a nomination was received for only one candidate to stand for election and as a result, according to the official rules under which the election is held, those seven candidates were elected unopposed.

In addition to the nine elected members, Marina Murphy was co-opted as a member during the first meeting of the OPC.

Emergency Medical Cards

The OPC Emergency Medical Card scheme was launched in 2003.

This simple card allows older people to carry around with them details of their essential medication. This is a potential life saver as in an emergency it quickly gives details of medication and allergies and could prove the difference between

life and death. The OPC has since 2003 distributed these cards to pharmacies and surgeries to make them widely available. We are currently involved in discussions with the Brighton & Hove Primary Care Trust and the Pharmacy

and Emergency Care Commissioners to explore ways of improving this valuable service.



Elder Empowerment - Marina Murphy

The third Older People's Council is about to begin its new term. Much has been achieved over the years and yet more is to be accomplished with increased community involvement. This is an opportunity to view the next four years with fresh eyes and new perspectives while embracing existing challenges.

According to reports there is going to be more of us as we live longer. We can choose to be proactive in shaping the quality and value of that life. As OPC continues to work with open minded policy decision-makers based on data and listening to identified needs, inclusion and access to healthier and less stressed lifestyles become possible.

However, in this stringent financial climate, what other resources can we call on? Let us start with valuing what we already have. Older people have skills, wisdom and experience. We support the economy, social cohesion and our families. These empowering attributes when recognised by us can shift our and others perception of what we can contribute, what we can make happen. Working together, responding to surveys, calls to meetings, sharing your views, is key to enhancing the work of the OPC. Our remit is scrutiny. Together and in collaboration we can make a significant impact on our empowerment as elders.

Grey Matters Productions CIC

We continue to provide the local community station, RadioReverb, with a 55 minute radio programme, "At Home this Morning", for older people made by older people. It is broadcast on

RadioReverb [97.2VHF] at 11.00am on Tuesdays. There is a new programme every fortnight, made in a special, well equipped studio in Kemptown, and broadcast six times in the fortnight. The Company is run by the OPC and the local Age Concern. All the team are volunteers. We are looking to ways of increasing the audience for our programme. We can be contacted through the Secretary, Harry Steer, 01273 419723 or Hrry371@aol.com

Resilience and the Older Person – Mike Bojczuk

In the face of the current financial climate with cuts in public funding, changes to the health service, and a longer living population, the elderly need to be more resilient. The question we have to ask is how can we become more resilient? One way is to look at vulnerabilities and strengths of the elderly, and work out where best to focus efforts to get maximum benefit with the limited resources we have. So who are the elderly in this city of ours?

Some insights can be found in the 2010 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health which reported that:

- 14% of our city is over 60, this estimated to rise to around 59,000 by 2029, with the 80+ group growing the fastest.
- The split between male and females aged 60 to 74 is roughly equal, but at ages 85+, over 65% are female.

- 7% of 60+ are from a minor ethnic group, about half that for the under 60s.
- 2.5% have high care needs, but the number of nursing home and residential home places fell by an average of around 20% between 2003 and 2007 as home care increased.
- In the 2001 census, 22,000 people of all ages provided some form of care of which 52% were aged over 50, and 5% aged over 85.
- Life expectancy at 65 is 17.5 years for males and 21.1 years for females, lower than the average for the south-east.
- About 10% of older people suffer from mild to moderate dementia and at any one time it is estimated that 10 to 15% of those aged 65+ will be suffering from depression.
- 40% of 65 to 75 year olds exercise more than 3 times a week but this drops to 25% for the over 75 age group – women exercising less than men.

Continued overleaf.



Resilience and the Older Person continued.

- In 2005, 27% of over 60s reported a support need, rising to 42% for over 75 year olds. Of these, 10% were wheelchair users with 64% having walking difficulties.
- Although alcohol consumption among the over 50s is within recommended limits, a significant proportion of men admit to drinking well over the recommended weekly limit.
- About 40% of weekly expenditure of the over 75s is spent on food, heating and household bills.
- 16% of households are occupied by single pensioners.
- 90% of over 60s were grandparents and they provide 26% of the city's childcare.
- 13% of volunteer positions are filled by the over 60 age group.



We see that as we get older we are more likely to become isolated even though many of us have extended families relying on us for child care. Volunteering work helps, but we need a more structured social network, especially as we approach 75 years of age.

We exercise reasonably well, but as we get older this tails off and can lead to injuries and difficulties that later on affect our quality of life.

Resilience is about knowing our own strengths and weaknesses; about concentrating resources to strengthen weak points. We need to concentrate on initiatives to promote physical and mental activity, and provide the means to reduce isolation – especially for the very elderly. This, however, should start with the 60+, or earlier, age group so that habits and social circles are established to take into old age. Given the means, most of us would like to live independent lives given the backing of a good social network, and an understanding social and health service.

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