

Brighton & Hove Older People's Council

Annual Report

2012-13



Supported by

**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Introduction

The work we have done in the first two full years of the current Older People's Council (OPC) is now bearing fruit. The city council is more aware of the importance of giving consideration to the elderly when proposing changes. Highlighting the importance of active ageing has led us to campaign to become a World Health Organisation (WHO) Age-Friendly City. While this project is gaining momentum, some areas have not been so successful, and the lack of toilets in the city is still high on our list of priorities.

This year we have improved how we work with other city bodies who also work on behalf of the elderly by being represented on their boards. So the OPC is in the unique position of being able to represent the views of the older people of Brighton & Hove to the city council in its discussions on policy and change.

Our Mission and Vision

We are elected to serve older people. We work to ensure that all older people here 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.



Grey Matters Productions

Grey Matters Productions continues to provide a local community station with a 55 minute radio programme, 'At Home this Morning', made by, and for, older people. It is broadcast on RadioReverb [97.2VHF] at 8am on Sundays, and at 11am on Tuesdays and can also be accessed at these times via the internet at www.radioreverb.com and clicking on "Click to listen online".

A new programme every fortnight is made in a special studio in Kemptown and broadcast six times in those 14 days. The company was formed by the OPC, Pensioners' Forum and the local Age Concern. All the team are volunteers. Some funding towards the transmission costs, the use of the studio and business costs was obtained by a grant from the city council. If you have ideas for future programmes, then please contact the OPC.

Foreword

Jack Hazelgrove (OPC Chair)



It has been an honour and a pleasure to serve as Chair of your OPC for the past few years, However, I will be retiring from this post at the Annual General Meeting in September and a new Chair will be elected to take the OPC forward. I thank my colleagues for their support and wish my successor success in the future. Honorary Alderman Francis Tonks is also retiring as Deputy Chair, though continuing to serve as a member until the next election in 2015. His contribution to public life over decades of service has been truly outstanding and long may it continue. The OPC has been strengthened by the co-option of Janet Wakeling, Penny Morley and Marion Couldery whose reports appear in this report. We are now more representative of older people in the city.

The outstanding initiative of the past year is thanks to our energetic secretary, Mike Bojczuk who promoted the resolution to make us an Age-Friendly City. Following a unanimous vote of the city council, we have been accepted as a member of the WHO's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. There is now much work to do over the next few years to prove that we deserve this accolade at a time of unprecedented cuts in government for local services. Everyone is invited to participate in this project, particularly the 47,000 residents over the age of 60.

The individual reports of our members show the wide range of our activities and interests from health to social care, toilets to public seating and housing to culture. The OPC has also worked closely with other groups in the city such as Pensioner Action and Age UK. We deeply regret that

the funding for the Pensioner magazine ceased this summer. Following the closure of Pensioner Action, a small group of us are looking at other ways of funding this well liked journal. We are delighted that following our requests the Older People's Day is returning this autumn.

It is less than two years now until the election of the next OPC, so please consider standing for election in one of the nine areas of the city. We are unusual in having an OPC elected by every citizen aged sixty plus who registers to vote. So if you are interested, please contact one of us for more information about how to become involved.

Finally I would like to register my sincere thanks to the council's Scrutiny Team for all their administrative help over the year – we couldn't do what we do without them!

The Older People's Council...

Francis Tonks (OPC Vice-Chair)

We live in tough times and older people are no exception, so we must thank the council for its continued support of the OPC and the help we have had from Tom Hook and Mary van Beinum.



The OPC has met on a monthly basis as well as holding quarterly public meetings on topics such as health, care, the council's budget and the Age-Friendly City initiative.

I have been involved in preparations for People's Day, where the Brighthelm Centre was used for Celebrating Age, as well as developments at the Level to help ensure that all ages are catered for. The OPC also took part in Speaker's Corner as part of the Brighton Festival.

Sadly, Pensioner Action is being wound up, as funds are not available to maintain it. However, we plan to keep 'The Pensioner' magazine going and I serve on the Editorial Committee. AgeUK Brighton & Hove will act as host, but the aim is to be firmly independent and support the various pensioner groups in the city.

I am a trustee of AgeUK Brighton & Hove. For months we worked with Kat Pearce and Paul Bramwell as interim Chief Executives. Now a new CEO has been appointed and we are glad to welcome Jessica Sumner to this post.

Jack Hazelgrove and I have worked

with a research project by Brighton University and AgeUK Brighton & Hove on Wellbeing and appear in the video they made.

Finally, as a member of LINK (Local Involvement Network) I visited a number of care homes to survey residents' views on the service they were getting. On behalf of Healthwatch, I have been trained to enter and view hospitals in a scheme called PLACE (Patient Led Assessment in a Care Environment).

Mike Bojczuk (Secretary) Central Hove and Westbourne

My second full year has been even busier, culminating in acceptance for the WHO Age-Friendly City programme (for more information on this, see page 11). An online forum will gather views from involved groups and is working towards a public survey. This will build up a picture of where we are now, and act as a springboard for ideas on improvements for future years.

Working full-time in London, I conveniently represent the OPC on the policy panel of the South East England Forum on Ageing. We have been focussing on issues around housing, health care and social care of the elderly and have had discussions with senior politicians and policy makers to keep them aware of the problems the elderly are facing.

Locally, I've been involved with several OPC initiatives and have highlighted



issues such as falls treatment in the Argus. Budgets are being squeezed in all areas and I try to be vigilant in the scrutiny of council proposals. I also work to keep the OPC website up-to-date.

I cycle as well as drive, am a keen walker and believe that all three should be kept apart on our streets and seafront where possible. I have raised this several times with respect to Hove promenade. I keep highlighting the benefits of active ageing and will continue doing so. Age is no barrier to the activities we pursue as my recent London to Brighton charity walk in 25 hours demonstrates!

My work on active ageing and becoming an Age-Friendly City stems from my belief that they are both fundamental to promoting well being and a good quality of life in a society where the average lifespan is increasing rapidly. The average 80 year old of tomorrow needs to be as physically and mentally able as a 60 year old today. If medical advances give us an extra 20 years of life, we should work to ensure it is not spent incapacitated and in poor health. Communicating the benefits, activities and how to help ourselves are also important areas to address in future.

Colin Vincent Patcham with Withdean

This year my OPC related activities have focussed on my special interests: social care and health. I have regularly attended the council committees which are responsible for these services and raised questions directly on issues affecting



older citizens in the city. I also attend the Overview & Scrutiny Committee which can review committee decisions referred to it by council members.

The main concern over the future provision of adult social care to support the growing proportion of elderly residents with complex needs in the city, continues to be the squeeze on local authority budgets. This has been brought about by reductions in annual grants from central government. Along with representatives of other local voluntary groups, I attended a briefing event in January on the draft budget for 2013/2014 organised by the council. I then represented the OPC at the Full Council budget setting meeting. On behalf of the OPC I supported the council's commitment to maintaining the eligibility criteria banding 'substantial' and 'critical' for funding care and support. This outcome was promoted by the OPC during the consultation process, budget presentations delivered by council officers and public meetings.

There are an increasing number of changes in how such care is being delivered which the OPC, as well as other stakeholders, are being consulted on. These include the re-tendering of homecare services, new contracts for care homes, the community meals service and extra care housing for residents with long-term complex needs who require access to on-call medical and community care services.

Another important on-going consultation is a review of the council's day activities provision for older people and vulnerable people with special needs. This would involve the redirection of service users to

other day facilities. I also took part in the consultation process on a draft local account produced by social services. This account set out the range of services the council provided to vulnerable people with a variety of special needs. This included a number of personal statements by service users outlining their experiences of accessing the system and commenting on the quality of the support received. Following the publication of the account, the council's social care team organised an event for service users together with carer and care providers from both the professional and voluntary sectors; I also attended along with other members of the OPC and took an active part in the discussions and workshops.

I was a member of the Brighton & Hove Link steering group, the local NHS patient watchdog and at present am a member of Healthwatch.

Further funding challenges face local authorities following the Chancellor's autumn statement in maintaining access to essential services, particularly social care for the elderly. However, I remain committed as a member of the OPC to continuing to campaign on these, and other issues, on behalf of the older citizens of Brighton & Hove.

John A. Eyles
Brunswick &
Adelaide,
Goldsmid and
Regency

Like it or not, as we get older our faculties slowly diminish. We are slower, less agile and more unsteady on our feet. Our hearing and sight may not be as sharp and recovery from illness and accident more prolonged.



These changes can make us less aware and less reactive to threats and dangers and this can in turn lead to accidents such as slips, trips and falls.

The most common of these is a fall - an event I am quite familiar with - having suffered two dislocations, one fracture needing a plate, and scalp injuries requiring 17 stitches!

Accident & Emergency hospital units admitted over 35,000 cases from fall injuries last year (2012) mostly from over 60 year olds which resulted in long and painful periods of recuperation.

So what are the common causes?
Inattention. Haste. Familiarity.
Unpreparedness.

- Inattention - is your mind elsewhere? Birthdays, visits, letters and problems occupy your thoughts and you are walking on 'auto-pilot'. Don't forget that medication can also affect your balance, vision and judgement.
- Haste - we can't now walk as fast as we used to, so to hurry is natural if we are late for an appointment or meeting. Older people are more aware of the importance of time and time-keeping and so tend to rush. Don't! You may not arrive! Pre-plan and mark out important dates and times, leave plenty of spare time to get to your appointments.
- Familiarity - a favourite. That old carpet with the frayed edges and tears. The slippers 'Oh so comfortable' but lethal. The cables to the TV, radio, fan are just as dangerous. That bag of charity stuff, the vacuum cleaner and anything else that obstructs the passage ('I meant to get rid of

that!', 'but I always wash the floor on Monday!'). 95% of falls are on walking surfaces and stairs.

- Unprepared - 'well it wasn't there yesterday', 'of course I can make it in these shoes', 'no I don't need a torch!'

We've all been there and done it. I can vouch for that. So be aware and care for your body, joints and head. Take care and protect yourself. This one of my areas of concern, in addition to road safety, environment, transport and community where I attend meetings to represent us older people.

Marion Couldery

For the last eight years I have been a volunteer with Age Concern, now AgeUK Brighton & Hove, in the Information and Advice office. I answer the telephone or see personal callers who are seeking help and advice with a wide variety of problems. Over the course of time, I get to hear of many of the things that are troubling older people in the city. I was also involved for several years in a research project run by the University of Brighton on what well-being means to older people. The report has now been issued and the findings are influencing how services are planned and managed. I can take part in discussions at the OPC with a knowledge that is not just from my own experience (I am 78 years old) but has been complemented by the many discussions I have had with other older people.

Many of the queries at AgeUK Brighton & Hove are about national issues such as pensions and benefits, but many



others are about how to access various local services. 'What do I need to look for in helping my mother to choose a residential care home?'; 'Do you know an optician who can visit me at home?'; 'I need to make a will but cannot afford to pay a solicitor'; 'My boiler has broken down and I cannot afford to buy a new one, is there any help that I can get?'; 'I am worried that I will have to leave my home, it is a council house and I now live here alone but I have lived here 40 years and do not want to move'; 'I do wish there was a bus that would take me directly to the sea front'; 'I need to buy a wheelchair but would like to find out about what types are available, where can I get this information?'; 'The parking in my street is so bad that I now cannot park near enough to my home, what can I do?'; and much, much more.

We have access to many leaflets and other information to offer help to anyone who calls, even if only giving them a telephone number. At the other end of the scale, we can spend several hours helping someone to complete a form for a benefit such as Attendance Allowance. In the course of this we often learn of the difficulties they have in their daily lives in Brighton & Hove. When appropriate, and of course confidentially, I can feed in what I have learned into the OPC debates.

Penny Morley

Since my co-option to the OPC last year, I have attended more council meetings to report back on pending decisions that will impact on older people. I have also done a lot of work to actively campaign for our programme on active ageing.



I have a great interest in activities that bring older people together. This is very important so that we keep active and maintain our social contacts, leading to better enjoyment and an enhanced quality of life. Working to reduce isolation will reduce the numbers of elderly people with health problems.

I have attended and monitored council meetings to make sure that older people and their activities were represented. I worked with Pensioner Action and their Age-Friendly City focus group which fed much useful information into the process. The role and activity of Pensioner Action and the enthusiasm of those involved will be much missed. Age UK are continuing the work of the Age-Friendly City focus group and I will continue to participate in this work.

I campaigned for all older people to have access to leisure facilities at reduced cost and proposed that some activities, such as swimming should be free, as they remain in a number of councils around the country. I also argued against the closure of bowling clubs and have written in the Argus about these issues to alert the public. A reduction in recreational activities reduces the opportunities for staying active and healthy. I also took part in Ping! which aims to make table tennis a much more accessible activity. The council should be promoting more activities, especially those popular for older people. Rather than cut the number of services, they should offer wider concessions to encourage the elderly to be more active.

Val Brown

Hangleton & Knoll and Hove Park

This has been a busy year for me as a lot of changes have taken place in areas that are a great concern to me: communication, the arts and heritage.



I have been following the planning and building of the Keep – Brighton & Hove's new historical and archive repository. It is good to see the building work finally completed but there have been some issues along the way. I have pursued most vigorously the planned access points to the building.

The original plans didn't appear to have catered well for access by public transport, with the bus stop from Brighton located too far away for anyone disabled or elderly with walking difficulties. The Keep is a fantastic resource and will have lots of interesting local historical items that will be of great interest to those of us that have lived their lives in the area. I still would like to see a bus stop on the site itself, especially as there is space for coaches to drive right to the building. I also like to get involved with older community groups and am a trustee at Somerset House in Kemp Town. This is an excellent day care centre with lots of different activities for those attending and a good lunch into the bargain.

Janet Wakeling

When co-opted to the OPC last year, I decided that due to my previous experience of how planning works in the council to concentrate all my efforts in this area. I have a great interest in the environment and conservation, which I use when considering changes being made in our city. I now regularly attend the council planning meetings, and as a member of the OPC can comment on planning issues as they are being discussed.



I use my voice to make sure that the effects of change do not impact unduly on the elderly. New buildings need to have easy access for the disabled and elderly. If this is a building earmarked for elderly people services, then easy access by transport such as bus stops needs to be thought through. Changes to leisure areas such as The Level need special consideration if they are to be enjoyed by the elderly. Toilet facilities, and adequate numbers of benches are also beneficial to families and the young. Changes in conservation areas should not detract from the existing Grade One buildings, some of which are stunning and attract lots of visitors.

I think I already have a reputation within planning of making my voice heard, which is good because the elderly have had more experience and knowledge of past disasters that could easily be avoided. In my spare time I relax by keeping my garden in bloom which is an excellent way of keeping fit and active - another message from the OPC. My mother at 103 is still well and active, has been so all her life and is a good example of how being active helps maintain a good quality of life.

Harry Steer MBE

North Portslade, South Portslade and Wish

I am the Chairman of the Hove Bluebird Society for the Disabled, now celebrating its 50th anniversary, as well as being a long standing member of the OPC. So my particular interest has been the area of social care and aid for the older disabled. Because of this I represent the OPC on the Practitioner Alliance for Safeguarding Adults, a body of professional care workers involved in investigating elder abuse. I am also very pleased this year to have been co-opted on to the board of AgeUK Brighton & Hove, again as an OPC member.



My main activity this year, however, has been as Secretary/Treasurer of Grey Matters Productions, the broadcasting company originally set up by the OPC, AgeUK Brighton & Hove and Pensioner's Forum. The Community Interest Company makes hour long programmes which go out courtesy of Radio Reverb (see page 2 for more details). I am now working for much closer ties and involvement with AgeUK Brighton & Hove and their new Chief Executive.



What is Active Ageing and why is important?

2012 was the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity Between the Generations, and where awareness of older people's contributions to society took centre stage. Although we were living longer, research showed that our years in good health had hardly increased and so we weren't fully appreciating those extra years due to poor health. Active ageing was seen as the answer.

But what, exactly, is active ageing? Despite its connotations, active ageing isn't about copious amounts of exercise. The definition is broad, and ranges from social activity (like chatting with friends) to physical activity (such as walking to the shops) to proper exercise (like structured fitness classes... or running and cycling). It is not something that starts in old age, but should begin in our mid-years if not earlier. It is also never too late! In only three months, those aged 65 and over can regain 20 years of lost strength through structured activity and exercise. Research has also shown that people who think positively about getting older may live as much as seven and a half years longer than those who view this stage of life negatively.

Active ageing means growing old in good health and participating as an active member of society, feeling more fulfilled in our jobs or hobbies, more independent in our daily lives and more involved as citizens. Being active increases engagement, improves confidence, resilience and control. It reduces anxiety and depression, as well as reducing symptoms of disease and improving function to help maintain independence. The key is to extend our 'health span,' or the period of life in which we enjoy optimal health. So what can we do to ensure that we're all ageing actively?

- Aim to be active each day. Minimise the amount of time spent sitting for extended periods.
- Most people have at least one area of their life - family, friends, work, hobbies - they feel good about. Identify an activity or connection that sparks your enthusiasm and make it your lifeline.
- You need energy and motivation to maintain healthy living. If you feel tired all the time, don't let apathy and lethargy drag you down. Get a check-up to find the cause - and the solution.
- Eating a balanced diet and maintaining a normal weight are also key to physical and mental health.
- Lifelong learning is important to an independent and fulfilling life. Start now to explore a new area of knowledge or learn a new type of physical activity.
- To improve muscle strength/balance and co-ordination: try exercising or walking for a short period at least two days a week. For those at risk of falls, use simple exercises that improve balance, strength and co-ordination.
- Volunteering and other forms of civic and social engagement can play an important role in maintaining good health in later life. Research shows that volunteers have higher levels of well-being and life satisfaction than non-volunteers. It keeps you active, increases your circle of friends and improves your self-esteem.

So if you're keen to get out and about, exercise more, do voluntary work or want to make new social connections, there are many local groups around the city that would welcome you.

The WHO Age-Friendly City Programme

In April 2013, Brighton & Hove was accepted into this programme – the second UK city to have done so. It is an international effort of the World Health Organisation to help cities prepare for the rapid ageing of populations. The programme targets the environmental, social and economic factors that influence the health and well-being of older people.

Brighton & Hove, having joined the network, is committed to a cycle of continually assessing and improving their age-friendliness. This will be done in a cycle of four stages:

1. Planning (Year 1-2): This stage includes four steps:
 - a. Establishment of mechanisms to involve older people throughout the Age-Friendly City cycle.
 - b. A baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of the city.
 - c. Development of a three year city-wide plan of action based on assessment findings.
 - d. Identification of indicators to monitor progress.

2. Implementation (Year 3-5)

On completion of stage 1, and no later than two years after joining the network, cities will submit their action plan to WHO for review and endorsement. Upon endorsement by WHO, cities will then have a three-year period of implementation.

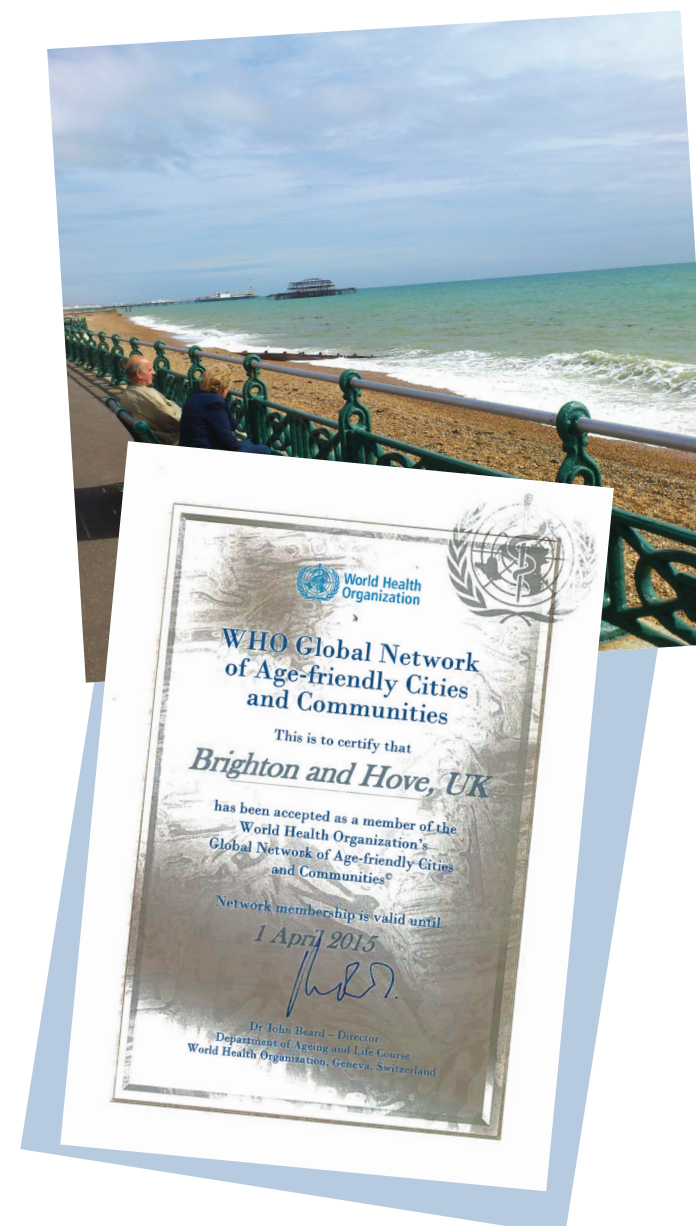
3. Progress evaluation (end of year 5)

At the end of the first period of implementation, cities will be required to submit a progress report to WHO outlining progress against indicators developed in stage 1.

4. Continual improvement

If there is clear evidence of progress against the original action plan, cities will move into a phase of continual improvement with a new plan of action along with associated indicators.

The OPC are represented on the Age-Friendly Steering Group who are currently working towards the stage 1 requirements – a baseline assessment, improvement plan and key indicators of progress. Consultation with older people is key to getting the baseline and action plan.



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.

The Pensioner Magazine

Due to funding changes by the new Clinical Commissioning Group, Pensioner Action has ceased to be, but we are hopeful that the magazine will still be able to continue with the great service and information it provided. The interim editorial committee have decided the only option is to charge for all advertising in future. If you do have a valuable service for the elderly and want to reach around 4,000 older people each issue, perhaps you would like to buy space in the magazine.

Advertising rates are

One page **£300** inside page,
 £500 front or back cover

Half page **£150**

Quarter page **£75**

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