

Brighton & Hove Older People's Council

Annual Report 2013-14



Supported by



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Introduction

We are now in the final year of this council's term of office, and will start to focus on the July 2015 election to ensure a good mix of candidates coming forward to represent the over 60s for the following four years.

If you are over 60 with the energy and desire to represent the elderly then we encourage you to stand for election. You can also register for the postal vote if over 60 and we urge you to do so. Details will be on the OPC and council websites. You can see from our accounts that the work we do is varied, challenging, has an impact and above all is rewarding.

This term has seen the OPC successfully campaign for the city to become a World Health Organisation (WHO) Age-Friendly City. We were also successful in lobbying to re-introduce Older People's Day after it was dropped a few years ago. Being under the support of the council's Scrutiny Team has opened doors for us and better enabled us to identify proposals affecting the elderly at an early stage, so bringing us into earlier discussion of council consultation papers whilst keeping our independence intact.

We have improved the way we interact with council departments and have become closer to other organisations working with the elderly, so as to ensure that the voice of the elderly carries to the heart of the city council on issues that affect the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Our Mission and Vision



We are elected to serve older people.

We work to ensure that all older people 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 decision making that affects their daily lives and the communities where they live.

The Pensioner Magazine

This year, the Pensioner Action group lost its funding, but with enormous support from Age UK, the committee plus members of the OPC got together and managed keep the magazine going. Funding was also found for a new website to complement the magazine as a source of information for the elderly. Credit is due to Sue Howley who has worked tirelessly to this aim. The website can be accessed through the OPC site or at www.bhpensioner.co.uk

Chairman's Report

Mike Bojczuk (Central Hove and Westbourne)

It has been a privilege to serve this year as Chair of your city's Older People's Council – elected by over 60s and strengthened by co-option of additional members. We continue as a critical friend of the city council, lobbying to present the older person's perspective on issues, taking part in consultations and scrutinising proposals for change.



This year we have focussed on issues surrounding housing, care services and health. These are key areas of change brought in by government legislation that will affect us all through the next decade. Based on the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the 'new' NHS began full implementation with responsibility for health service commissioning moving to the new Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and other bodies created by the act.

The year also brought in funding reforms for social care and support, based on the 2011 Dilnot Report and the 2012 Draft Care and Support Bill. They have now given rise to the Care Act 2014. This finalises the funding reforms for social care and sets out the responsibilities and duties of care expected. Councils will now have a duty to consider the physical, mental and emotional well-being of any individual needing care, plus a new duty to provide preventative services to maintain people's health.

The new £3.8bn Better Care Fund is part of the strategy of getting the NHS and local government working together to integrate areas of health and social care. This bringing together of the CCG and Adult Social Care should enhance the services provided by the council and bring more focus on preventative care.

These final two years of our term will thus see a great upheaval in health and care services for all age groups. Add to this the recent welfare reform in social housing, introduction of the Universal Credit, pressure to provide more housing in an already crowded city, and we see there is a huge amount of change to be planned and implemented.

Considering the redesign in how our services are delivered, it's important to be vigilant about the range of services and standard of care provided. Key decisions are being taken and plans drawn up that will affect the health and well-being of older people over the next twenty years, and the OPC need to keep close to decision makers and keep up the lobby for older people. Plans for housing must include a proportion of suitable independent accommodation for the elderly. Changes in health and care must also come with a robust measure of effective performance – preferably from the service users themselves.

We started in 2011, and continue to work for an age-friendly city, and we wish for a future where the vulnerable at both ends of the age spectrum receive the support, care and dignity that could be held up as a model of how a truly great city should be.

In my first year as Chair, I would like to thank Jack Hazelgrove, the retiring Chair, for his continued help and support. I also owe a great debt to Penny Morley who has shown great energy and diligence as Secretary. In this last Annual Report before the election of a new Committee,

I would also like to extend my thanks to Councillor Bowden for his work on our behalf, to the council's Scrutiny Team for their unstinting support, and to all the OPC members who have continued to give time and energy to our cause.

Mike Bojczuk, Chair OPC

Secretary's Report

Penny Morley

The Older Peoples Council has been involved in a large range of issues this year and this summary should give a flavour of some of our work.

We ran a stall at Patching Lodge in October 2013 which provided an opportunity to meet older people in the area. Finance is key to the ability to provide decent services for older people and we have pressed the council, including the Leader, about maintaining high quality services for older people and to guard against cuts falling disproportionately on older people.

We have participated in the Age Friendly City steering committee. Members of the OPC with Age UK have also

participated in a forum of active older citizens, putting forward ideas related to the Age Friendly City work. The two areas under detailed consideration this year have been Transport and Housing. For older people the ability to move about the city, meeting friends or family is key to breaking down social isolation. We have pressed for good bus services and the retention of the bus pass. We have participated in council-run transport workshops and fed in a range of ideas to assist older people in access to transport.

The OPC has particularly targeted housing this year as a key priority. We visited several sheltered schemes, talking to residents to get their views on the positives and negatives of their residency. These were fed into the council's Housing Strategy Review. The OPC ran a workshop on Housing at a council conference to ensure that input from older residents was part of the wider process when considering housing needs in the city. We produced a paper on Housing for Older People (available



on the OPC website) which co-ordinated the views that we had from residents. A public meeting on Housing and Older People we held had both councillors and council officers speaking, so that we could have a well-informed debate for the public. It is clear that pressures on housing are mounting due to lack of availability, but our role is to ensure that wherever possible older people's views and concerns are taken into account in any new policy adopted by the council.

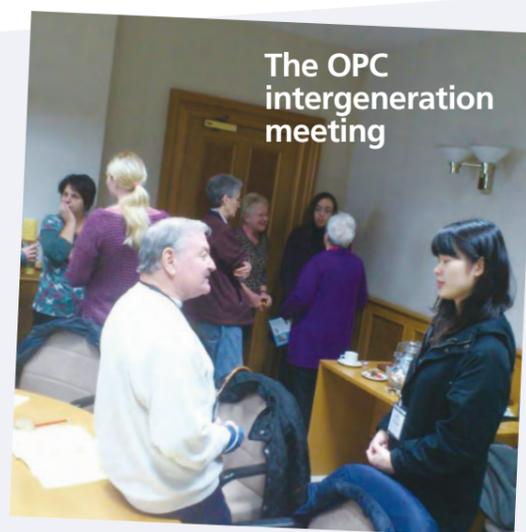
A number of OPC members made suggestions with regard to the recent National Lottery Bid co-ordinated by Age UK. This included participating in a consultation day when many older people from across the city put forward views and ideas about reducing isolation. The OPC are consulted on council proposals impacting older people. This year these have included a Review of Polling Districts, Shoreham Harbour Scheme, and Stanmer Park Restoration Project. We have also submitted letters to The Argus on the budget, and responded to negative views about the role of older people in our society. We encourage inter-generational working and the OPC held a productive meeting with the Youth Council.



The Older Peoples Council public health meeting

The OPC has links to and works in partnership with organisations relevant to older people. Due to constant changes in health, we organised a public meeting on Health with speakers covering Public Health, Healthwatch and the CCG, as we felt it was important for older people to be able to question those in positions of responsibility.

I would like to thank the members of the OPC, including Councillor Bowden and also the staff in Scrutiny that have worked hard to support us throughout this period.



The OPC intergeneration meeting

Older People's Stand – Older People's Day July 2012



The Older People's Council...

Colin Vincent
Vice Chair
(Patcham and
Withdean)



This is a summary of my activities over the past twelve months together with a review of developments in my areas of special interest – social care and health – since 2011.

The financial constraints brought about by the ongoing reductions in central government grants to local authorities, despite the council's efforts to offset through efficiency savings, has, and will continue to, have a significant impact on the delivery and commissioning of services for our elderly frail and vulnerable residents. A recent report from the Chief Executive of Anchor, the largest housing and care provider in England, states that budgets have been cut by 26% over the past four years against a 14% increase in demand in the period. It also states that elderly patients spent 833,000 more days in hospitals in 2012-2013 because there was no care package in place to allow them to be discharged back to their homes.

Turning to the issues of qualification and financial support for both domiciliary and residential care, the passing of the 2014 Care Act now establishes a legal minimum standard of eligibility. Also the maximum contribution by people towards their care costs is £72000. However, as with most legislative statues, the devil will be in the detail still to be defined. The OPC is meeting with council officers to receive a briefing on the implications of the Act for older people and how they intend to implement its provisions.

The 2012 Health & Social Care Act has already made a dramatic impact on the way medical care services are commissioned, delivered and managed. The commissioning of NHS services was passed from Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) – clusters of local GP practices which now design and buy most NHS services for residents of Brighton & Hove.

In Brighton & Hove plans are being developed jointly by the CCG and the council to provide an integrated care and support system to deliver a 24/7 joined-up care and treatment support service with the expectation of avoiding unnecessary admissions to A & E, hospitals and also to residential care. I attended an initial presentation on behalf of the OPC on the Better Care Project and we will continue to monitor its progress as it unfolds.

Along with others on the OPC, I continue as a member of an independent advisory group on a palliative care project by King's College University Hospital and Sussex Community Trust. The aim is to devise and implement a palliative care service in the community for elderly frail people living with a carer or alone on a short term crisis basis. The research team are now selecting volunteer subjects prior to launching the pilot scheme.

The OPC is also affiliated with the National Pensioners Convention which campaigns on issues affecting all pensioners by lobbying Parliament and regular contact with MPs and members of the House of Lords. I represent OPC at meetings of the South Eastern Regional Branch. The OPC is currently promoting the NPC Dignity Code's adoption by the city council in relation to the services it provides directly and indirectly through private and voluntary organisations.

John A. Eyles
Brunswick &
Adelaide,
Goldsmid and
Regency



This past four year term of office has been invigorating, sometimes exhausting but always informative. The monthly meetings have addressed a wide range of topical subjects and concerns which affect the older person. Changes in legislation, pensions and health care will affect us all and in particular the older person. I have been privileged to provide input and comments on a number of strategy panels which have resulted in recommendations to the council cabinet and reflected the views of older people in council policies and their strategies.

My work included the Dignity Panel addressing how quality of life and independence of the elderly can be maintained and improved, and how isolation can be minimised. Recommendations included better training for carers, prioritising housing allocations to maintain community and individual family links, developing a greater awareness of people's needs and preferences, and establishing a city-wide carer database.

Attending the Community Safety panels, I raised concerns about perception of 'danger' through the city. Older people were more aware of risks to themselves and possessions and tended to limit their activities to daylight hours. Concerns ranged from road and cyclist threats with real and perceived abuse at home.

Recommendations included providing a simpler and confidential system of reporting occurrences, and better information availability, and identifying

'hot-spots' of crime to concentrate resources where needed.

I took part in the Alcohol and Older People consultation resulting in a programme being 'rolled-out' in March 2014 to focus resources, advice and assistance in identified areas of the city.

In Waste Management Scrutiny Panels, increasing domestic waste, collection methods and future developments were examined and recommendations made for separating waste, and collections.

Meetings on public toilets considered expert advice and current demands and technology. Recommendations were to maintain existing provision, to prepare an action plan for the future, expand the 'use our loo' card system and improve accessibility to retail and council facilities. It was also suggested that new 'pop-up' and temporary units be provided in high demand periods and evenings.

In the Road Safety scrutiny panels, we considered freedom of movement, encroachment of pavements, and cyclists. Speed limits and parking were major concerns for schools and the elderly, with crossing times often too short. Recommendations included reduction of pavement obstructions and pavement encroachment, enforcing forecourt boundaries together with the consideration of proposed 20mph speed restrictions as a city-wide strategy.

I attended local events including The Brunswick Older Persons Project, Hove Station Development Group, West Hove Development Group and other joint public events.

Currently I also regularly attend the Environment, Transport & Sustainability and Housing committees.

Harry Steer MBE

North Portslade,
South Portslade
and Wish

In reviewing the past year, I thought it was time to go over the whole period I have been involved with the Older People's Council. As a founder member and past Chair, who had visited Denmark to study that country's model, and now in my third term of office, it may be time to consider retirement. Looking back over our inauguration, I feel we have come a long way since our early days. At first we had a struggle to find acceptance, and it was questioned why older people should need separate representation. Our early campaigning helped, particularly the scheme to provide medical cards, the brainchild of Bob Gunnell who recently passed away, and who was such an enthusiast in those early days. Thinking of Bob, I am mindful of other OPC members over the years who are no longer with us, and of the contributions that they made. I remember them with affection and gratitude.

It was Bob Gunnell, of course, formerly of 'Radio Brighton' who set up our broadcasting company, 'Grey Matters Productions' now with myself as Chair, which is still going strong.

Over the years, I have been particularly concerned with elder abuse in all its forms and have been a regular attender at the meetings of PASA (Practitioner Alliance for Safeguarding Adults). I have also tried to spread the word about our OPC, and my one regret is that other councils have not taken the opportunity to set up similar elected bodies. I have addressed meetings in London, Cambridge, Lewes and elsewhere and welcomed visiting representatives who came to Brighton to learn about the OPC but we remain unique.



Marion Couldery (Co-opted Member)

I was co-opted onto the OPC in 2012 hoping to be able to use my knowledge and experience of working with older people to influence changes and new developments which would affect older people in the city. I have been disappointed in that, while the OPC is given information, by the professionals involved, immediately in advance of changes proposed by the council and the Health Authority, it is seldom consulted at a stage when comments from OPC members could affect the initial proposals. I have pressed for change to be implemented which will make the OPC a more influential body in safeguarding the interests of older people.

Meanwhile, I have continued with my weekly volunteering at Age UK in the Information and Advice Service, seeking to assist any member of the public over the age of 50 with any type of difficulty they are experiencing. This means that in the course of any day I become aware of the type of issues which are concerning older people in the city. Common themes emerge, worries about housing, about pensions, about debt and about care for themselves or older relatives; information being sought about transport, disability aids, social activities or professionals who will make home visits; advice being sought about disputes between neighbours, making a will or arranging power of attorney. And, in particular, concerns about loneliness and isolation which affects so many people when they are no longer able to continue with activities they used to enjoy and when friends and family have passed on or moved away. In debates at the OPC I am able to draw on these general themes and reflect concern expressed by members of the public in the hope that the council or health authority officers presenting a paper will take account of these issues when making proposals for change.



Francis Tonks

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

I attend the Community Safety Forum on behalf of the Older People's Council. This consists of councillors and representatives of the police, fire service, local action teams and community groups. It is a useful meeting to raise concerns, question the police and suggest priorities. Over the year, recorded crime has gone down, though there are some disturbing figures for domestic abuse and hate crimes. In general, older people have a voice here and are listened to.

I was an active member of LINK (Local Involvement Network) now replaced by HealthWatch, and also attended the LINK's mental health group. I visited care homes, a surgery, physiotherapy services and Millview. Residents were given a questionnaire to assess their views of the services they received. This proved a valuable means of looking at the provision of care for the elderly. I did help to obtain a new pedestrian crossing for one group of elderly people.

In recent months I have chaired The Level Community Forum. The Level, in the centre of Brighton, has been restored and revived with millions of pounds of lottery money. There is now an excellent children's playground and a new skate park. The gardens are so good they were awarded a Green Flag. As a forum our aim is to see The Level is maintained and developed for all members of the community and we had a launch not long ago when thousands turned out to enjoy the place. There is still, however, a need for amenities for older people.

Overall the Older People's Council has a continuing role to play as a pressure group. We want health services, safety, good transport, education suited to our needs – so the work of the OPC must continue.



Sue Howley (Co-opted Member)

I was co-opted to the OPC last year, following the closure of Pensioner Action, whose Committee

I chaired. Since then, most of my efforts on behalf of older people have related to 'The Pensioner' magazine, previously produced by Pensioner Action. The decision was taken by the Pensioner Action Committee to try to keep the magazine going, although there was no source of funding apart from what we could raise ourselves from advertisements. A new group was formed to keep the magazine going and has so far been successful. My thanks are due to Jack Hazelgrove and Francis Tonks who sit on this group. We have won a small grant from the Sir Halley Stewart Trust to create a web presence for the magazine and my thanks are also due to Mike Bojczuk for advising on this.

My main interest in terms of OPC business is communication with and between older people (and particularly effective two-way communication with service providers) and the best methods of providing information. The problems can be particularly severe for those older people who do not have online access, especially if they are also socially isolated. How do we ensure such people are not disenfranchised in an increasingly digital age? I am also interested in facilitating communication amongst those who provide groups, services and facilities for older people, so as to prevent unhelpful duplication, and hope that 'The Pensioner' website, once developed, can help here. It will also be interesting to explore how the website and printed magazine can feed



off and strengthen each other, but even more interesting is the prospect of going beyond this and working with Grey Matters radio productions to develop a 'multi-media hub' for older people, covering print, digital and sound resources.

Jack Hazelgrove
(Stanmer & Hollingdean and Moulsecoomb & Bevendean)



When I joined the Older Peoples Council seven years ago the voters had elected nine men to represent their interests. We later changed the constitution to allow us to co-opt two additional members to go some way towards gender balance. During my time as Chair, we progressed to the present composition with five women playing a full part in our activities. There is a full election of the OPC in 2015 and my earnest hope is that the over sixties in the prime of life will come forward to play their part on behalf of their generation.

As part of my duties I have taken a special interest in health related matters, including being co-opted to the council's Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee. We have welcomed the government's approval of the redevelopment of the original 19th century buildings at the County Hospital but when will the first stone be laid? Perhaps before next year's general election? I continue to be involved in two research groups including one sponsored by Kings College, London on palliative care – still in the early stages. One of the

most interesting meetings was that organised by the United Patients Alliance calling for the recognition of the beneficial effects of medicinal cannabis. It is claimed that there is scientific evidence which shows that Cannabinoids are beneficial for many conditions. I also attended my Patients Participation Group at my local Medical Centre and would urge readers of this report to do likewise.

During the last year we lost one of our most notable former members, Bob Gunnell aged 87, described in his obituary in the Guardian as a broadcaster and a pillar of cultural life in Brighton & Hove. Educated at Hove Grammar School, Bob was founder manager of BBC Radio Brighton in 1967. He also served as a Magistrate and as an Independent Member of Hove Borough Council. In 1974 he became founder Chairman of the Brighton & Hove Arts Council. These are just a few of his many activities and we must not forget the radio broadcasts he organised up to a few months before his death. I was honoured to succeed Bob as Vice Chair of the OPC and I was delighted to see his many achievements duly published by the Guardian.



RSCH original buildings awaiting update... but when?

Janet Wakeling
(Co-opted Member)



When co-opted to the OPC a few years ago, I decided to use my previous experience of how planning works in the council to concentrate all my efforts in this area. I use my interest in the environment and conservation to good effect when considering changes being made in our city. I regularly attend the council planning meetings and, as a member of the OPC, comment on planning issues that arise. I use my voice to make sure that the elderly are always considered, especially with the larger developments that come under discussion. New buildings need to have easy access for the disabled and elderly. If a building is earmarked for elderly people services, then easy access by transport such as bus stops needs to be thought through. Toilet facilities, and adequate numbers of benches aimed at the elderly 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. Debates around applications can be long and hard fought, and I still painfully remember one such meeting lasting nearly seven hours! This year I have also brought planning issues into the OPC with officers discussing plans for Shoreham Harbour and the new 2014 city plan proposal at our monthly meetings.

I have always had a reputation within planning of making my voice heard, and use my experience and

knowledge of past disasters to warn of what proposals could lead to. I have enjoyed the time I have spent with planning both as a councillor and a member of the OPC, and would thoroughly recommend this to anyone who wants to get to know the city and be involved in preserving some of the gems we have in Brighton & Hove.

Val Brown
(Hangleton & Knoll and Hove Park)



This year has seen the opening up of the OPC to the older LGBTQ people who live in Brighton & Hove. As a Trustee of the Somerset Day Centre I have been active in helping to launch a new 'Older and Out' monthly programme at this day centre which provides a monthly lunch and gathering for all older Brighton & Hove LGBTQ residents. Numbers attending continue to rise. In July 40 of our members enjoyed a leisure boat trip from Brighton Marina to both piers followed by lunch at the Marina – and a good time was had by all. A direct spin off from the Older and Out programme has been the recent appointment of a dedicated LGBT worker at Brighton Switchboard. The worker is actively engaging with Cornerstone Day Centre in Palmeira Square with a view to planning future activities for OLGBT Hove residents. Together we visited the newly launched day centre at Barford Court in Hove with a view to recommending the provision of inclusive and dedicated LGBT day activities in the near future.

Bob Gunnell – a tribute

Bob, who has died this year aged 87, was a broadcaster and seen as a pillar of cultural life in Brighton & Hove. Born in Hove and starting working life for the BBC, he progressed to become the founder manager of BBC Radio Brighton (now BBC Sussex). He was also an Independent Councillor for Hove Borough Council, founder chairman of Brighton & Hove Arts Council and played a role in the establishment of the Brighton Festival.

Bob was one of the founder members of the OPC, elected in 2003 for the Patcham and Withdean wards, serving for eight years, four as Vice-Chair. His experience and efforts helped towards the 2006 Celebrating Age Festival – a

weekend of arts performances and exhibitions featuring older people held at many different venues across the city. His experience in radio was key in setting up and running Grey Matters Productions, which produces regular radio programmes aimed at the elderly, and which he still managed in his final years.

He will be remembered for his contributions to the city's art and cultural life, and he has been a big influence on the OPC, leaving us a communications legacy which will serve us well in future years.



Bob at Grey Matters Productions

Grey Matters Productions

Grey Matters Productions continues to provide 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, 11am on Tuesdays or online at these times at www.radioreverb.com Archived programmes are on the OPC website.

Programmes are made every fortnight and broadcast six times. All the team are volunteers. Funding towards the transmission, use of the studio and business costs was obtained by a grant from the city council. Contact the OPC if you have ideas for programmes.



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