



Brighton & Hove Older People's Council

Annual Report 2016-17



The Annual Report of the OPC is the report of elected members of the Older People's Council. The Older People's Council does not form part of Brighton & Hove City Council and the report is not a report of Brighton & Hove City Council



Brighton & Hove
City Council

The Older People's Council

We are an elected body set up and supported by Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) in terms of provision of meeting space and other administrative support.

The Older People's Council (OPC) was established to inform the policy and decision making of Brighton & Hove City Council, including services and resources that impact on the quality of life and opportunities available for older people in the city. This need will continue whatever the future form of representation takes for older people in the city.

Our members, all of whom work on a voluntary unpaid basis, represent wards across the City. We attend relevant council and health related public meetings. Unfortunately this year BHCC has decided to discontinue support for the OPC. During this difficult period we have continued to actively promote the interests of older people and our report outlines our activities during the year.

Our Purpose

- We listen to and represent the views of older people in Brighton & Hove to influence change.
- We challenge disadvantage experienced by older people and promote their human and civil rights.
- We scrutinise and actively promote the needs of older people to achieve good quality public services.
- We promote dignity and we support the aspirations of older people wherever they live in the City
- We publicise our work through networking, public meetings, ward events and local media.

Chair's Foreword

Colin Vincent (Stanmer / Hollingdean and Moulescoomb / Bevendean)



In 2012 The Older People's Council (OPC) proposed that Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) apply to the World Health Organisation to work towards, and be recognised as, an Age Friendly City. The application was given unanimous cross-party endorsement at a meeting the same year.

The process of achieving the required objectives is still a work in progress. This work is being undertaken by the BHCC Age Friendly City (AFC) Steering Group with input from the AFC Forum (which is open to all). It is to be hoped that current financial limitations and key staff changes do not halt or hinder this process.

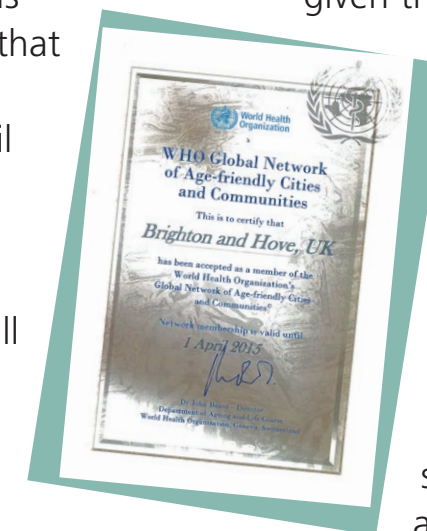
As the council are fully supportive of an Age Friendly City it is particularly distressing that this year the OPC were informed by the council that the administrative support it provides will be withdrawn in 2018 and in addition they will no longer fund future OPC elections.

This recommendation went before the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee devoid of any acknowledgement of the work done for the city's older citizens by past and present OPC volunteer members. A second report (an Equalities Impact Assessment) failed to adequately ad-

dress the effect of disenfranchising 38,000 over 65s in the city without any prior attempt to ascertain their views. OPC members attended the committee meeting and attempted to contest the recommendation, but the same political party alliance that was involved in the original proposal voted it through.

While considering our options and given the threat to our continued existence, the OPC will continue to promote and defend the collective interests and welfare of older citizens in the city (according its constitution) on a range of issues including; health and social services, transport, housing, safeguarding, dementia care and support.

In conclusion, we will endeavour as a democratic non-political organisation to work with other voluntary organisations, both locally and nationally, who have the interests of the elderly as their core objective.



Secretary's Report

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

It has been an extremely busy year for the OPC. We have had a number of changes with Nick Goslett (Hangleton & Knoll & Hove Park) leaving and John Cook (Patcham) and Michael Whitty (Westdean) joining the OPC.



Many thanks to Nick for his contributions and to Mike Bojczuk who stood down as Chair in October 2016. I have also been grateful for the support of all of the OPC members during the year. The OPC is also grateful to the council officers who have provided support for many years, and in particular to Karen Amsden in recent times.

The OPC activities in 2016/17

The Older People's Festival - OPC members participated in an inter-generational debate with Dorothy Stringer pupils as to whether the older and younger generations have far more in common than is often suggested by the media.



Fairness Commission - we pressed for greater accessibility for older people across the city and met with Possability People to jointly put the case to the council. Subsequently they wrote to Councillor Daniel supporting the OPC priorities relating to social isolation, more progress on becoming an Age-friendly City and a greater recognition that digital only access excludes many older residents.

Elder Abuse - met with the Elder Abuse Recovery Service to discuss and highlight this growing issue of concern for older people and to identify where they can get support and help. To contact email: enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk or call 0208 8359280.

Residential & Home Care - discussions were held with the relevant council officer regarding the new home care contract which is jointly held by BHCC & the Clinical Commissioning Group for five years. The OPC members raised questions re; monitoring, costs, quality of care and the need for a follow up plan on monitoring.

Dementia - OPC members participated in Dementia Alliance events, some having had personal involvement in this issue and others with experience of care homes providing services. Dementia services are a growing issue of concern. They need greater resourcing and to be made a focus for the future, with over 3,500 people in the city diagnosed with dementia.



Health - There has been a wide range of issues relating to health. The OPC had an update on the Brighton Citizens Health Survey from Dr Carl Walker in November. This survey also went to the Health & Wellbeing Board of the council. We continued to raise concerns including the closure of GP surgeries in Brighton, the debacle about Patient Transport with Coperforma, NHS funding and structural changes. Students from the University of Sussex observed our meeting in November as part of their studies. Colin Vincent represents the OPC on the council's Health & Overview Scrutiny Committee and has been instrumental in raising a range of issues about services that impact on older people throughout the year.

Safeguarding - Graham Bartlett, the Chair of the Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Adults Board, presented a range of information to the January OPC meeting. There were a concerning number (1,064 last year) of safeguarding enquiries regarding older people. The OPC offered to help the Board with building community awareness which was welcomed by Graham. See www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/keeping-people-safe for more information.

The council's budget and its impact on older people

The OPC worked hard, especially from December 2016 to February 2017, to lobby the council about the budget cuts which would impact on older people. Full details of the letters, briefings and press articles are to be found on our website

www.olderpeoplescouncil.org

We wrote to all three political parties outlining our concerns about the budget cuts to Adult Social Care and objecting to the proposed swingeing cuts to the Youth Service. We had a public meeting in December where James Hengeveld from BHCC Finance explained the basis of the council budget.

In January 2017 we met with the council Leader Councillor Morgan. We raised issues about the proposed cuts to the Health & Adult Social Care



budget would impact on a range of services including occupational therapy, community equipment service, Tower House, community transport, health improvement, dementia facilities, public transport and public toilets. Subsequently, a number of changes were made to the final budget plans and we believe that our lobbying contributed to this outcome. We liaised with other community groups as part of this process, in particular Community Works.

OPC Communications

We held public meetings in December, March & June with speakers discussing the council's budget, Health & Adult Social Care services and Healthwatch. We also discussed the future of the OPC given the withdrawal of support from the council. An options paper for the future will be presented to the 2017 AGM. The Chair & Secretary appeared on Latest TV to discuss the council budget and the proposals for the OPC.

This year we produced an OPC information leaflet thanks to the work of Mike Bojczuk. Printed copies were circulated at meetings to ensure a wider understanding of our role, aims and objectives. John Cook co-ordinated the printing of 3,000



copies for distribution - thanks to Mike and John for the work on this. We continue to participate in Grey Matters Productions, a 55 minute radio programme for older people on Radio Reverb.



Speakers from the Husting event at Brighthelm

Due to the snap General Election called in 2017 we agreed that older people in the city should have the opportunity to question candidates from all the main political parties about how their policies would impact on older people. A meeting was held at the Brighthelm, chaired by Frank Le Duc of Brighton & Hove News and representatives from all the main political parties were invited. Many attendees confirmed that they appreciated the event.

Future of the OPC

The Chair has covered our views on this issue in his report. Decisions about the future of the OPC and whether current members wish to continue under completely changed circumstances have yet to be resolved.

Lynn Shields

(East Brighton and Queen's Park)



This year has proved challenging for everyone involved in providing support to those most in need in our society. To paraphrase Churchill "never in the history of the welfare state have so many owed so much to so few". I am extremely grateful to those who dedicate their lives to public service at a time when they are pushed to do more and more with less and less funding. This is not only true of the council and NHS workers but of those who work for the third sector organisations.

My voluntary activities include being a member of the Age Friendly Steering Group and The Age Friendly City Forum.

I have been working with a very active, council led, Falls Prevention Group who are imparting invaluable information to a wide range of, NHS, council and third sector service providers on limiting the physical and mental consequences of a fall. Now the message needs to reach a wider audience.

I am a voluntary member of the Healthwatch Enter and View Team who work with hospitals, GP surgeries and special clinics to ensure standards are met and maintained. It is all about identifying best practice and suggesting priorities to achieve positive outcomes for all concerned.

At the 'Big Health & Care Conversation' in the Brighton Dome I was delighted to learn that the excellent presentations from various health workers involved in 'Caring Together' were being taken on the road to inform and support those most in need. Knowledge is power. With our GP situation in Brighton & Hove being so precarious, it is essential that those most in need understand how to get the best from the system.

The Citywide Connect Hubs which I attend continue to provide an excellent conduit for information and sharing best practice and they are enabling our various organisations to work more effectively together.

Community Works continues to harness the power of our voluntary workers. Please do take up a voluntary role if you can. It is good for you and good for those you help.

At a time when many of our residents are facing difficulties we have to hope that the dedication and effectiveness of the few is enough to meet the needs of the many.

Useful links

www.mylifebh.org.uk/ - a directory of useful services in the city including health, social care and housing

www.brightonandhoveccg.nhs.uk/publications/plans-priorities-and-progress/plans/caring-together

bhcommunityworks.org.uk/

www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/

John Cook

(Patcham)

The OPC identified the need to create a greater awareness to reach out to the lonely and socially isolated in the Patcham community. So an application for funding was granted by Brighton & Hove City Council to produce a new four page Local Action Team (LAT) newsletter that was shared with the Withdean LAT. Loneliness is a killer, and it takes but just a few moments to introduce anyone suffering from isolation to many of the great social events happening daily in our communities. Our great city is very blessed with some very proactive groups that reach out to help the lonely and socially isolated. Just to mention one outstanding group: Time to Talk & Befriending Services – I would willingly guide anyone looking to fill a few hours with interesting companionship to their website www.timetotalkbefriending.org.uk



Our sister company Grey Matters – a radio production company – is now more active than ever in producing programmes of interest to older people in our communities across Brighton & Hove. We have now established a weekly programme schedule that all can listen to via “RadioReverb” on 97.2 VHF/FM in Brighton & Hove and also on the Internet at www.radioreverb.com/

If you feel you have an interesting story that you think would be of interest to your peers see: www.olderpeoplescouncil.org/GMContact.htm

Mike Bojczuk

(Central Hove and Westbourne)

I relinquished my position as Chair of the OPC a year ago so I could concentrate on helping others in a more personal and practical way.

I am a volunteer ‘digital champion’ and have been to many senior housing schemes to help residents engage with digital technology. We still have a majority of over 75s who have no knowledge of the internet, and even the over 65s who use digital tablets and phones still need a lot of help.

This city is also one of the poorest in early diagnosis of cancer, so I volunteer with the Albion in the Community team on cancer awareness activities at local



community events, and am a volunteer speaker for Prostate Cancer UK.

We had a long campaign against adult care budget cuts, and I am pleased that Tower House is now in use again by the SVP charity as a day centre.

I continue to work for an age friendly city, maintaining the OPC website and following housing and care issues. My work on older people’s issues also includes membership of the South East England Forum on Ageing and in my spare time I’m a happy member of the Brighton & Hove Walking Football Club.

Francis Tonks

(Rottingdean Coastal and Woodingdean)

We have had a year in which we have struggled to maintain and continue the Older People’s Council. It has also been a year of referendums and elections, all having an impact on the lives of older people.

I have attended the Pensioners Association regularly. It meets monthly at Patching Lodge. I also go to the Kemp Town Society. I belong to a Singing for Better Health groups. Most of us are elderly. At such weekly sessions we have half of hour of simple exercises, followed by an hour of singing.



I am also a member of a research group run jointly by Brighton University and Age UK. The latest project is to look at the self-funding of Adult Social Care. The method is to interview self-funders and collect evidence. It is still at an early stage but I believe this will be a valuable piece of work.

I attend Blue Plaque events and recently we exhibited panels on the Great War at the Jubilee Library.

Finally, I am a member of the Patients Participation Group at the Pavilion Surgery. Our current aim is to put on an exhibition on promoting Health Eating.

John Eyles

(Brunswick / Adelaide and Goldsmid / Regency)

Another year of change with election fever and results having their effect on both the national and local scene. The council has continued with its reforms to premises and committees which have resulted in the use of a variety of venues after vacating Kings House.

I am continuing to monitor the procedures and decisions of the Environment, Sustainability and Transport committee while keeping in touch with the Hove Station Neighbourhood Forum.



A prime area of concern is that of air quality and the impacts on the health of the local population. There are proposals to improve traffic flow through 'hot spots' such as North Street, Rottingdean and Lewes Road in an attempt to improve pollution levels. Controlled parking zones are being implemented in Queens Hill, Hollingbury and Portslade and other consultations are under way.

In a move to improve the beach litter problem additional bins are to be installed by Cityclean and 23 extra people are to support beach cleaning, particularly after events and holiday periods.

Further discussions are in process with the Hove Gardens developers and the District Valuer regarding the amount of affordable housing to be provided after the Hove Station proposals were refused planning consent. Some development has commenced on the north of the railway track with some closures on the Sackville Industrial Estate prior to development. All-in-all, a time of new area planning and neighbourhood involvement.

Jack Hazelgrove
(co-opted Member)

I have been involved in several research projects this year, the first of



which is a study of the issues facing those who through means testing have to fund their own social care.

The second, under the auspices of Cicely Saunders Institute, is developing new provision for palliative care for those suffering chronic rather than acute illnesses.

Thirdly, I am on a group at the Royal Sussex County Hospital which reviews proposals for research from medics which brings a lay perspective to bear on the presentation.

In addition to my role on OPC I am Chair of the local branch of the National Pensioners Convention. I also serve on the committee of Community Transport (Brighton, Hove & Area), who are the currently searching for a new home pending development of Preston Barracks. I am also a member of the Park Crescent Patient Participation Group.

Michael Whitty
(co-opted Member - Westdene)

During the past 12 months, I have worked voluntarily in the community for the OPC and the Withdean and Westdene Local Action Team (WWLAT) helping local residents and communities to understand the facilities, opportunities and services available from the council, charitable and voluntary organisations in Brighton & Hove.



Local Action Team (LAT) Coordination across the City

The LAT Chair's Forum which I co-chair has received presentations from Katy Bourne (the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner), Judith Fields (Citizens on line), Tracey Maitland (Possability People) and Sean Podesta (Neighbourhood Befriending). This forum is attended by ward LAT chairs, councillors, the police and council officers from across the city.

Westdene Barn Campaign

A campaign to save the Westdene Barn, was commenced following the council decision not to maintain the building, which resulted in the local community leasing the property for a five year period. A refurbishment programme was started to bring the Barn up to standard for use by the local community as a business venture. Thanks to donations and grants the campaign has been successful and the Barn is now a going concern, open for hire use by local groups and organisations. One of the ventures undertaken is to provide a lunch club for older people as well as music events, summer fairs and other activities for local people.

Westdene and Withdean Local Action Team (WWLAT) Action on social isolation.

In September 2016, we set up a network to identify the aged, lonely and vulnerable in the city because no other group was doing this (except in a piecemeal fashion). We joined

with the Patcham LAT to form the Withdean and Patcham Network (WPN) producing a newsletter with contributions from the Fire Service, Police and local clergy to reach out to each household in the areas of Withdean, Westdene, Patcham and Hollingbury and find the people in need. We have delivered 10,000 copies of the first issue and the second issue has just launched. This is active achievement, effective and measured.



As a co-ordinating hub we are able to bring together voluntary, charitable and council funded groups. Forty one percent of the population in Brighton & Hove are living alone (and this number is set to increase) compared to a national average of 31%. It is no surprise that loneliness is a powerful predictor of whether or not one will be alive in 10 years' time. This is where the OPC, the LAT's, the council and other groups can come together to be efficient and effective.

The partnership enjoyed between the council and the OPC has a proven record of achievement and this should continue.

Keeping healthy & getting active

Older People on Pension Credit or Attendance Allowance can get a 40% discount with the Brighton & Hove Leisure Card.

The OPC raised with BHCC and Freedom Leisure the low take up of this facility by older people on Pension Credit seeking action to improve take up. We pressed for better communication about this reduction and a communications campaign has been undertaken. This includes a new leaflet that has been issued across the



City, a radio interview on Grey Matters emphasising the opportunity for older people on low incomes to use facilities at a reduced rate and social media information. For more information call 0845 8035519 or contact the Healthy Lifestyles team on 01273 296625.

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.

Contact us

Email

olderpeoplescouncil@gmail.com

Post

Older People's Council,
c/o Brighton & Hove City Council,
Room 167, First Floor, Hove Town
Hall, Norton Road, BN3 3BQ

Website

www.olderpeoplescouncil.org

