

SENIOR PERSON'S COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 21ST JANUARY AT 10.30AM AT
HENFIELD VILLAGE HALL, HENFIELD, WEST SUSSEX

NOTES

Attendees:	Barry Mursell	(BM)	-	Chair, Broadbridge Heath
	Frank Bockling	(FB)	-	Vice Chair, Billingshurst
	Paul Smith	(PS)	-	Resident, Copsale
	Judith Hollingdale	(JH)	-	Resident, Henfield
	Betty Ogden	(BO)	-	Resident, Henfield
	Lesley Ainslee	(LA)	-	Resident, Henfield & W.I.
	Audrey Beagley	(AB)	-	Henfield W.I.
	Peggy Weeks	(PW)	-	Resident, Henfield
	Dot Davidson	(DD)	-	Resident, Mannings Heath
	Michael Jarvis	(MJ)	-	Forest, Horsham
	Ann Gover	(AG)	-	Resident, Warnham
	Bryan Sunderland	(BS)	-	Resident, Southwater
	Keith Barraclough	(KB)	-	Resident, Billingshurst
	Carole Arendt	(CA)	-	Resident, Southwater
	Richard Aris	(RA)	-	Resident, Roffey
Councillors:	Doreen Harbour	(DH)	-	Ashington Parish Council
	Doug Rands	(DR)	-	Billingshurst Parish Council
	Sheila Matthews	(SM)	-	HDC
	Jonathan Chowen	(JC)	-	HDC
	Duncan England	(DE)	-	HDC
	George Cockman	(GC)	-	HDC
	Brian Harvey	(BH)	-	Forest Neighbourhood
Officers:	Liz Catchpole	(LC)	-	Carers Support Services
	Trevor Beadle	(TB)	-	Head of Hsg & Community Dev, HDC
	Terry Oliver	(TO)	-	Broadbridge Heath PC (Apologies for late arrival)
	Mark Trimmer	(MT)	-	District Cdr, Horsham Sussex Police
	Claire Ebelewicz	(CE)	-	Snr Youth & Older Persons Officer, HDC
Apologies:	Dorothy Harrison			
	Eva Matchsy			

Part 1: 10.30 – 11.30am – Audience with Mr Nick Herbert (MP) – Minister of State for Policing and Criminal Justice

To include:

- **Presentation on SPC**
- **Presentation on Conservative's policies concerning older people**
- **Question and answer/general discussion**

Presentation on SPC:

BM introduced Nick Herbert MP and gave background to the history of the Senior Persons' Council, which started as a group who represent the older person.

Presentation on Conservative's policies concerning older people:

NH had read a copy of the notes of previous meeting on 7th December which gave him an understanding of this group. He said he had a strong interest in the issues the group promote as he feels it is an important part of his agenda as a local MP; to make sure the interests of older people are represented. Being in the Coalition Government as Minister of State for Policing and Criminal Justice as well as being the local MP, he feels this falls under his interest.

In talking about the wider issues **NH** felt that any Government should promote agenda to treat older people with respect and to ensure they are able to live in dignity. He felt that the media tend to focus on the younger generation whereas the balance of the population is 'older people', but it is hoped that people wouldn't fall into the trap of feeling that one group is being treated badly, as each generation brings new issues. For the younger generation at the moment we have the issues of tuition fees, entering the property ladder and carrying debt with perhaps no job available on entering the job market. A particular issue at the moment for the older population is that with the present focus on internet services - 'on-line' - there is a generation not finding it all accessible.

We have the big issue of resources. Pensions went through a period of sustained growth. The Government have supported a link in pensions to earnings, rather than means tested. The Coalition believes triple lock state pension should rise, going forward 2.5%, to ensure basic fairness for older people.

It is not just earnings which are causing problems; this is also about public services as we rely on these, young and old alike. The focus should be on police and neighbourhoods and also the Health Service, which we draw on as we get older. The availability of these become more and more important as we get older with the cost of health more expensive and there is the question of how we make this more affordable, with the suggestion of cutting public spending and prioritising health care, so this will not be cut. Primary care is going forward in West Sussex and is very good, with GPs building on this giving them the strength to reduce bureaucracy. Ensuring high quality health care is a priority for this Government with provision of social care, as well as in moving into residential care with support services. This is not an easy time for the country as we have been through a 15 year period of economic growth with money flowing in, but there being no focus on value for money, and we have been getting increasingly 'overdrawn' with an economic deficit leading to the serious position we find ourselves in. It is felt there is public support in general but there are difficult individual decisions being taken, including those of local authorities. There must be a move back to wise spending, with protection for the vulnerable and public services being high on the agenda.

Question and answer:

1. **BM: Q)** Said he has seen things happen in the past with the mention of young people and whilst there is sympathy, we have the situation of older people seeing low interest rates leading to loss of income per year. With Child Benefit, it is sometimes felt that benefits are easy to get for some with no checks being made.

NH: A) Agreed with the comment on interest rates, but lower interest rates are good in terms of economic growth. However, he would want to see higher interest rates at this time, with welfare reform for young on benefits - back to work benefits especially. **BM** replied that although there is attempt at trying to stimulate economic growth, it hasn't been seen, for example, in places like the holiday industry, with sales being seen here.

BM: Q) Asked when the Government would be getting tougher on petty crime and had concerns that ASBOs are often seen as an equivalent to an OBE. Short jail sentences have been identified as ineffective, leading to no sentence at all.

NH: A) Replied that some offences are too often not treated as crime when they should be and there is a review on ASBOs being carried out. Local police are working with HDC and are getting results; for example, the situation at Storrington with the persistent trouble makers and anti social behaviour has been dealt with by working together. These problems can't just be left to the police as they are being asked to make savings of £13 billion per year - over £1 billion per year can be saved by better working together, leading to operating more efficiently while protecting front line services. The reduction in the workforce will not just affect uniformed personnel but also 'back room' people, although no cuts are being seen to neighbourhood policing. The problem is that two thirds of prisoners, coming out of a short sentence in prison, are offending within the year. They are not being rehabilitated. Some have learning difficulties or alcohol problems and these must be addressed.

2. **FB: Q)** Raised the point that at the present moment the country has a 3 tier policing system; Police Officers, Specials/PCSOs, who have powers of arrest but are powerless, and Constables.

NH: A) Replied that with a recruitment drive in progress for Specials there has been a huge increase in this area. It is felt they are an important resource which should be valued, with 57,000 active in the post war period. We should make more use of them. There has been a big drive in London which has proved successful. PCSOs out on patrol and working with PCs are popular with the public but if we convert PCSOs into PCs it would cost more, so would be fewer and not so effective. **NH** said he felt it would be better to press for more street wardens and there is now a group called Street Watch which has been started in Hampshire with volunteers out on patrol. This group is like Neighbourhood Watch but is out on the streets and reporting back. It is now spreading throughout the country. All should work together.

3. **MJ: Q)** Said that in his view prisons were not only purpose built to protect the public but also to punish offenders. He felt that this was not happening and perhaps money could be saved if there were no facilities, making them places offenders would not want to go to. As far as social morality and rights – people should have responsibility for their own actions, only then do they have rights.

NH: A) Replied that David Cameron has spoken about social responsibility on his website and referred to his speech “Rights without responsibilities - a decade of the Human Rights Act”. **NH** thought Tony Blair was right in ‘Respect agenda’. Having visited prisons **NH** felt that, in the main, they were not places you would want to go to, particularly with the overcrowding. They are places that, too often, people are left idle and locked up for long periods of time. With TV in cells it encourages idleness, not giving purposeful activity. It would be better to introduce work and responsibility, with mental and health issues addressed. Some of the short term prison population were in care when young and have now alcohol and drug problems, leading to them needing help. We have to help prisoners withdraw from drugs with treatment, otherwise they will reoffend.

4. **BS: Q)** Raised the issue regarding the recent problem with Ford Open Prison. **NH: A)** Replied that it had not been working properly for some time, the principal of an open prison being that at the end of a long prison sentence it should prepare the prisoner for the ‘outside world’, giving the opportunity to go out to work during the day and return in the evening. In principal a good idea, but doesn’t work if the wrong prisoner is in that regime and there is an enquiry looking into this now. **BS** asked if the problem was that there was not enough staff and **NH** said that there should not be the need for more staff as these prisoners should be the ones who want to ‘go straight’ etc. but reiterated, this does rely on the correct prisoner being in there.

AG: Q) Agreed with this view, being a prison visitor previously, and said there were people in prison with severe mental health issues etc. with no support when released. Even when in prison they have to wait, leading to apprehension when released back out into the community without support. Some, in this situation, are also away from families who are unable to visit and this could be one factor for some problems which may arise.

NH: A) Said there was some evidence that being away from family may cause problems and may make them reoffend, but it could be that their situation has arisen because the prison they find themselves in is the only one available at the time of sentencing. Referring to a previous comment on length of sentencing, **NH** said that even if we could afford to lock prisoners up twice as long, for example, 6 months instead of 3 months, they are still going to be released at end of this period, and if problems are not addressed and they are left with no support, job or house etc, this would be ineffectual. The main issues should be addressed.

5. **RA: Q)** On taking up the query on rehabilitation of prisoners he asked that, with the cost of training, how we would ‘square’ that with the economies Government are making. Regarding the point on the health system and value for money; how can we access value for money and what criteria?

NH: A) Referred to pioneering world first; payment by results. This is started as ‘welfare to work’ and companies will pay up front. If the company is successful, i.e. with a positive result in helping someone back into work and with the applicant being successful in securing the job, the company will be reimbursed; if not, there will be no reimbursement. The thinking behind this is that if the person goes back into work, benefits stop so will cost the taxpayer less, not more. Private companies and charities will be a paid success fee.

RA asked if this would only work when prison is privatised and **NH** said that this wouldn’t be the case; if companies deliver they are paid.

TO commented that he was glad to hear resources are being retained for front line services and agreed, regarding communications, that methods should be made public for people unable to access the website for information – he applauded **NH** for saying this.

6. **DR** raised the subject of cold calling (and the idea that documents seemed to be designed to leave people unable to be released from agreements). In the Parish, a lot of PCs were seen on foot patrol, more than the PSCO, who tends to be seen driving around and then gone.

DR also expressed concerns on why £48 million a day is paid to EU – not value for money.

NH: A) On the cold calling issue – Pulborough have a local action team who liaise with police and warn people it is happening. There should be re-focussing on community policing - would like to see growth in volunteering and this is where Street Watch comes in. **MT** said this is already being looked at for West Sussex.

On the EU issue - We are not paying to the Chinese anymore, as there was a long standing concern about this budget. It was in our interest to be part of the EU but this should be for trade, not as a super state. **NH** was glad we did not join the Euro as he felt it wasn't in our interest and it was something he was against. On the PCSO query; this is not in his 'patch' but he will mention the concerns to Francis Maude. He felt that PCSO presence should be visible.

Part 2: 11.30am – 12.30pm – General Meeting

1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

BM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies recorded above.

2. Notes of meeting held on 1st September and 7th December 2010.

Apologies to Barry Mursell on incorrect spelling of his name on the notes of 7/12, the remaining notes were agreed as correct record of meetings.

3. Correspondence received since last meeting

- Letter from WSCC ref. "Your day. Your say"

CE: A sub group from the Council had responded to a WSCC consultation regarding changes to day care services in the county; our interest being the Horsham District. After receiving a letter from County Council in response **CE** has arranged for Sally Moir to attend the next meeting of the SPC to outline the work the County Council is doing regarding older people.

4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

CE: With both **BM** and **FB** being nominated and willing to carry on in their roles as Chair and Vice Chair respectively this was put to the vote, with all members in favour, therefore **BM** will remain as Chair and **FB** as Vice Chair of the Senior Persons' Council.

5. Review of Constitution

BM: Explained that, as this can be a long process, it was decided not to take forward at this meeting and proposed that this will be put before a small sub committee, **MJ** supported this view. **BM** stated that 5 members would be needed for this sub committee and that anyone who wished to be included should let **CE** know at the end of this meeting.

6. Presentation from Guest Speaker

- Liz Catchpole, Information Worker for Carers Support Service, North and Mid Sussex

LC thanked the group for their invitation to the meeting and gave a short presentation on her work, which covers Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex. She pointed out that Chancetonbury, (Steyning, Storrington and Henfield), is covered by the Worthing Carers Support Service. These organisations work collectively as West Sussex Support Services and meet regularly, so there is consistency. **LC's** main role is provision of information with the production of a service leaflet, carer's handbook and a quarterly newsletter circulated to all carers on the mailing list. The other part of her role, being keen to work with grass roots organisations and groups, is attending various meetings to inform people on her role.

Because of the Census we know how many carers there are, however, some are 'hidden'. Vulnerable people are mostly cared for by carers, friends and neighbours.

On the question of how many carers are in the Horsham district? The 2001 Census asked this for the first time and the result was a total of 12,000 carers in Horsham, which is 10% of the population; of which over 1,500 provide 50hrs or more of care per week. There is a 'peak age' of 45-64 for carers who juggle 'caring' and working. They tend to find they suffer financially because of the 'caring' role, which can also impact on their own health and wellbeing, bringing additional emotional stress.

The Carers Support Service provides practical and emotional support for carers and also link with GP practices. They offer encouragement for both the GP and practice staff, as well as the carer. Carers can visit GP practices and see a Support Worker, or can request a home visit. Specific support for mental health problems or support/help for carers looking after adults with learning disabilities can also be provided. The Service has 2 teams of counsellors who provide emotional support. They also have a telephone call-back service which can be arranged for an agreed interval enabling them to call the carer for a general chat. In addition to the emotional support the Carers Support Service provides, they can also help with practical problems which may arise. This may be for help with completion of various forms; for example, if the carer is entitled to Carers Allowance or Disability Allowance

The Carers Support Service runs a new Horsham Carers Support Group, which started in September and is held in Lavinia House, Denne Road; speakers are invited regularly. There is also a national Carers Week event held in June.

BM said many people have personal experiences of carers; men, for example, don't consider themselves as such, with some being too proud to ask for help when problems arise. Parish Council representatives may be aware of people in their locality and **BM** said it should be made clear that there is no stigma involved when asking for help and asked all to convey the message to as many carers as possible when the support is not there.

BO reported that she had watched a programme involving 15-16 year old child carers, who find they are dealing with homework and providing care. They were afraid to ask for help as they felt they may be put into care and the places which they would normally go to for support (e.g. youth clubs) are being closed. **LC** said there were no direct services for young carers but Carers Support Service work closely with WSCC Young Carers Service. It is a hidden area which does worry Carers Support Service.

RA said he was sure that many carers were totally unaware of what support was available and although there are leaflets, there should be more publicity forthcoming from the Government regarding what is available. **LC** suggested possible publicity through the local magazine; **CA** agreed with this. **RA** reported that he visits an elderly lady who puts any mail delivered into her waste bin, so there may be need for other form of publicity. **DD** suggested GP surgeries.

7. Reports from members who have attended Events/Meetings on behalf of the Senior Persons' Council

- Preparing for an Ageing Population

BS said documentation has been produced and is progressing steadily. **CE** reminded everyone that a copy of the draft Strategy was circulated at the December meeting and had asked all to look at this and come back with any comments. Some updates have been done, more in terms of structure.

BS asked how we judged the results. **CE** said the final document was due to be adopted by Cabinet on 24th March. Implementation will be through Annual Action Plans monitored by Annual Reports.

8. Updates on Senior Persons' Council's Projects

- Christmas Lunch and Entertainment for Vulnerable Older People

BM reported that information received back from Bernard Baldwin said all went well on this day and it was a success. Age Concern had opened for 1 day during the shut down period at Christmas as a pilot scheme and 12 members of the HYPER (Horsham Youth Council) had supported the day and provided lots of entertainment. There was no doubt about the enthusiasm of the young people and thanks were extended to **CE** and Hope Bounds at HDC for organising this. At the end of the day, the members of HYPER were grateful for the involvement and would be interested in other projects - **BM** asked **CE** to pass on thanks to HYPER. **CE** reported that Hope Bounds would be liaising with Bernard Baldwin on this.

9. Updates on Consultations the Senior Persons' Council has been invited to respond to or has responded to:

CE: Reported on the West Sussex Adult Services' Review at the last meeting and a sub group was to meet on Monday 24th January to discuss.

10. New issues the Senior Persons' Council may wish to consider:

BS raised the point of getting people on 'on-line', with perhaps someone introducing the concept at one of our meetings. **CE to investigate.** **DD** thought the problem may be cost mostly and **BM** pointed out that there is the use of computer service at the local library; **FB** agreed that this is an excellent service. **RA** said that if the need was for just email there are telephones which have this facility.

CE received letter from South East Drivability, who were at Life is for Living 2010. A brief outline of their services as follows:

- Provide assessment and advice on driving and car adaption for drivers who have a confirmed medical or cognitive condition. Driving ability assessments are designed to help those people whose disability arises as a result of illness or injury.
- With the rise in the population of older people and, as the cessation of their driving licence may result in their inability to access services and may result in depression and isolation, there is the need to improve the range and quality of services provided in order for the client to be able to adjust to living without a car.

CE to follow up and invite to future meeting.

11. Publicity Update

CE said new flyers are available for the Senior Persons' Council 2011, listing meeting dates for this year. **If anyone would like a copy/copies please let CE know.** **CE** commented that a press release with meeting dates had been sent out.

At the last meeting there was talk of development of a newsletter and articles were received, but more are needed. **Any ideas for further articles please let CE know.** **CE** suggested an article about the today's meeting with Nick Herbert.

CE reported that the SPC had been offered a regular slot - perhaps a half page article - in the quarterly 'Life is for Living' newsletter. All agreed to accept this offer.

12. SPC – Member update

- Mr Baden

Sadly, we were informed by his daughter that, after suffering from ill health, Mr Baden has passed away.

13. AOB

TO: Item 4 on notes of last meeting regarding mixed signage; **TO** made the comment, 'mixed signs along area', rather than what was reported, 'mixed usage area'.

SM: Referred to Horsham District community profile; Henfield has largest population of 80 year olds, which puts pressure on volunteers. The Parish also has the 2nd largest amount of young people in lower income bracket. This highlights some of what Nick Herbert spoke about earlier in the meeting. Also, in defence of the PCSO, **SM** felt they did good work in Henfield.

JC: Horsham District Council's grant from Government was 3rd lowest in the country. The grant received was to pay for statutory services and therefore, it did not include the discretionary work of the Council including **CE's role** and that of Street Wardens.

BM: The Coalition has brought in the 'Big Society'. This is set to involve the local community, especially in more decision making. The SPC was important in helping the Council do this. **DE** said there is tremendous job being done.

DR: It was pointed out that the previous comment on PCSOs was not meant as a criticism, it was just a local observation.

AB referred to future of libraries; these may need volunteers to keep them open. It needs to be made clear what libraries do; often a lot more than loan books. **CE to ask someone from local library to attend future meeting.**

PW commented that she was very impressed with the telephone call received from Horsham District Council during the recent spell of extreme cold weather enquiring after her welfare!

MJ: Pharmaceuticals Review had been completed and there was a lengthy report containing interesting statistics. It was suggested that **MJ invite speaker to future meeting.**

AG commented that the Christmas lunch was very good, including the mixing of generations.

14. Dates of future meetings:

Monday 14th March in Washington Village Hall, Washington
Wednesday 15th June in St Michaels Church Room, Partridge Green
Thursday 15th September in Rudgwick Village Hall, Rudgwick
Friday 9th December in Beeding & Bramber Village Hall, Upper Beeding