

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCIL

10.15am 18 JULY 2017

HOVE TOWN HALL, ROOM G90 - HTH

MINUTES

Present: Colin Vincent (Chair), Penny Morley, John Eyles, Mike Bojczuk, Lynne Shields and Francis Tonks

Co-opted Members: Michael Whitty

PART ONE

320 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

320.1 Apologies were received from John Cook and Jack Hazelgrove.

321 MINUTES

321.1 The following amendments were made to the minutes:

- Under 312.3 to add the website address www.digitalbrightonandhove.org.uk to the information on the Digital Partnership.
- Under item 318 to recognise that the actions listed on page 9 starting with 'Attended Pensioners Association Meeting' were carried out by Francis Tonks.

321.2 Matters arising

- Lynne Shields has written a letter to the Muslim community to send their condolences to them.
- Lynne Shields has used the council website to complain about toilet provision.
- Colin Vincent still to speak to Cllr Allen about the Open Market toilet.
- Query about council diaries & KA now sent out to OPC members.
- Mike Bojczuk to put a question to next Housing Committee about older people in tower blocks.
- Penny Morley has written to Geoff Raw re: high rise blocks, the elderly and emergency provision and received a response which has been shared with the other OPC members.
- KA has written to Comms and PPS team about the budget and timetable for the annual report of the OPC. Lynne Shields to edit the text she has received from the other OPC members and then forward to KA.
- Michael Whitty was praised for the work being done to identify aged, isolated and vulnerable people in Withdean and Patcham, Westdene and Hollingbury.

- The OPC were pleased to hear about fire checks being carried out in care homes by firefighters.
- Mr Scott had informed the OPC about an open meeting re: Valley Gardens and to keep an eye on this issue and potentially invite Buswatch to a future meeting.

322 NEIGHBOURHOODS, COMMUNITIES & HOUSING

- 322.1 Larissa Reed, the Executive Director for Neighbourhoods Communities and Housing (BHCC) began by explaining that her responsibilities included emergency planning (examples of emergencies she was involved in included the 7/7 London Bombing and incidents in Canterbury). She was the local authority representative on the Sussex Resilience Forum Executive which also includes the police and army.
- 322.2 The council has an emergency plan which has been agreed with the first responders (blue light services) and statutory services. The council role is to provide council services in an emergency setting, e.g. where needed providing rest centres rather than housing. Their key focus is to look after people, although Building Control will look at buildings. Unfortunately the councillors and officers have a lot of experience of emergency issues, due to incidents such as the Shoreham Airport crash – where although not in our area, BHCC took the lead. Last Christmas BHCC had to decant a tower block of residents into hotels and this involved weekly meetings with the fire service and regular meetings with other emergency services.
- 322.3 The council stages a number of pretend incidents, e.g. for a week to see how dealt with serious weather such as flooding and act out what would happen in such a situation. To add to the reality have people posing as reporters present and the army sit in, all too make the incident seem real. Increasingly a lot of testing is done rather than reacting to incidents, chiefly because of the time it can take to hold an enquiry into real disasters such as Hillsborough and the Marchioness.
- 322.4 The council has 24 tower blocks with cladding, but none of them have the same materials as Grenfell Tower. The council is now working with the freeholders of private tower blocks. For example Sussex Heights, which is the tallest tower block in the city, where there are known to be older and disabled residents. The council has sent out a checklist to all freeholders and have offered them safety checks. The council is also offering to visit any people who are concerned about fire safety issues e.g. to develop their own personal evacuation plan. It is a struggle to get people to agree to have this visit, so would welcome any help from the OPC to encourage take up. The visit is free and is very useful and the information will only be used for that person's safety. Larissa explained that she had her visit. She also confirmed that information in individual plans would not affect the resident's insurance, e.g. for flooding. Insurance organisations would already ask people in high rise flats about fire incidents.
- 322.5 The council has also written to all the Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) about this issue and are going to update the information on our website to reflect this. Some tower blocks have pro-actively contacted the council about fire safety. Then last Friday morning there was a small fire in Sussex Heights, which was well contained and the fire service was there within 6 minutes. The voluntary sector was on standby to help and the evacuation plan was used to evacuate 3 people.

- 322.6 Sprinkler systems in tower blocks could become mandatory, which was a recommendation after the Lakanal House fire in 2009 but not made mandatory then. The council has put in sprinklers in their new build such as Brookmead, due to its vulnerable tenants. They also have a programme for installing sprinklers, based on the risk of inhabitants e.g. vulnerability or if a resident has a history of fire starting. **Action:** LR to provide the OPC with information on when sprinklers are still due to be installed.
- 322.7 Larissa confirmed that none of the BHCC buildings have the same aluminium cladding as Grenfell Tower. While they have four blocks with the same system, they do not have the same materials so are not combustible. The council was good at dealing with fire. There was a tendency to box in pipework, which realised could be creating a chimney – so we are now making sure that putting in a fire resistant stop and checking it meets building regulations. Checks were also being made to identify where leaseholders have removed fire safety doors. Another safety concern is windows, for example in Essex Place where there was a fire fatality. Whilst some residents ask about fire windows in the blocks, then complaints are made because one cannot open the windows.
- 322.8 The council was offering private tower blocks the opportunity to work with them on fire safety and work together to suggest and identify potential problems and make them known to the Fire Service. **Action:** LR to provide information on fire safety and links that the OPC can put on their website. Larissa had an hour long interview on fire safety on BBC Radio Sussex and would be happy to be interviewed by Grey Matters. She was also a police trainer on local authority responses to emergencies. Action: LR to develop a text box on fire safety that could be put into newsletters and on websites and forward to the OPC, Communities Team and Democratic Services Team. Michael Whitty explained that the Withdean LAT newsletter contained a fire safety item.

Questions to Larissa

322.9 *Do you operate a gold and silver and bronze system for dealing with emergencies?*

LR explained that there was a gold and silver rota for major incidents such as Pride. The gold trained staff undertake the strategic oversight and make decisions, silver staff act as the operational decision makers and bronze staff will be on site and there will also be incident liaison officers. This is a similar system as used by Fire and Police and means at BHCC there are 5 trained competent person able to take on the role of gold commander (contactable 24 hours a day in an emergency) 365 days per year.

It is good to hear about the work being done on fire safety with care homes and nursing homes where there are vulnerable people and the regular checks these homes are subject to, but how often are hotels checked who often accommodate elderly people?

LR explained that hotels, both large and small were not regularly checked, it was the responsibility of Fire Safety to deal with hotels. However this council and the Fire Service had an extremely close working relationship and had held regular meetings since 1979 to have oversight of the key issues facing the city.

I recognise that there are resource issues for both the Fire Service and BHCC, so who would carry out inspections of Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)?

There is the Housing, health & safety rating system (HHSRS) which can be used to assess whether HMOs present such a risk and the authority has the right to take action and get the HMO closed down. The council does have to be invited to inspect the property and then make a report, or without this permission can go to get a court and get a warrant to be able to inspect. BHCC is currently consulting on a licensing programme for HMOs after a pilot project for 12 wards, and this would involve regular fire safety checks.

Are we still checking lifts and specifically what plans do you have for people with disabilities?

LR explained that the council had invested significantly in lifts and the advice to residents was not to enter lifts in cases of fire. Only use a fire lift in such situations. There is a lift maintenance checking programme which has led to much improved lift performance. Although the council was good at fire, it would always learn from disasters such as the fire at Lakanal House.

Was it still the best advice to remain in one's flat in the case of a fire? Grenfell Tower has made people concerned about this policy.

It is still best to stay put until you have been advised otherwise by the fire service. They would give a Commander on site and an evacuation plan and the foremost concern for the fire service is peoples' safety. If the fire is in your flat then you can help by leaving your flat and closing the door, but if the fire is in another property then it is best to stay in your home with a closed door and dial 999. Fire houses in Haywards Heath are used to train fire fighters get people out safely. It was important to remember that 225 were saved by the fire service at Grenfell Tower, made possible by their training.

How are local authorities learning from the issues experienced by LB Kensington & Chelsea?

BHCC were meeting with the voluntary sector this afternoon, as they have been identified as crucial in terms of the response and activity they can provide especially as one reaches day 3 of an emergency – such as the Red Cross and Womens Institute. At Grenfell there was no co-ordination of these volunteers a week after the disaster. LR was also producing briefings for councillors, and providing training, as those in Kensington & Chelsea were criticised for not being visible after the event.

How do we bring our communities together and encourage their resilience? Some OPC members have attended resilience workshops which were populated with professionals but not members of the public.

LR agreed that there were significant communications issues with events such as Grenfell Tower, for example on day 1 the fire service was hailed as heroic but by day 6 was being pressurised to name victims. If insufficient information is not given out, then people will fill in the gaps. There was a need to emphasise that the services were standing together. Community trust was fragile and leaders are expected to be visible. LR praised the Leader of Camden Council who spoke publically about the issues they were facing about decanting tenants out of fire blocks. She felt that although the staff of K&C had done a significant amount of work to respond to Grenfell Tower, the leaders

needed to be more visible. In Brighton & Hove all 3 leaders are visible with senior officers when a disaster happens.

I would like it recorded that helicopters on roofs do not work due to updraft.

LR explained that 'water curtains' were not used in the UK. She was concerned that in some schemes people had not wanted sprinklers as the water could ruin their belongings. Michael Whitty emphasised the importance of people being made aware that the sprinklers used such a fine mist that it would not damage property.

322.10 The OPC expressed an interest in these issues and had written a letter of concern to the council's Chief Executive. LR recognised that they could be a valuable part of the community to use in terms of their website and meetings. Also if digital information was not accessed by older people, it could still be valuable to their family and/or carers. It was agreed that it was valuable to target digitally savvy older people in blocks and encourage them to disseminate information. It was agreed that education on fire safety was vital and that there was a need for a communications strategy for the city especially sheltered blocks. LR was responsible for the Digital First Programme and had also experienced difficulties in residents not being willing to pay for WiFi. However Wifi sensors in Leach Court could also be used to detect humidity levels. LR would appreciate the assistance of the OPC when rolling out programmes such as this.
Action: LR to contact the OPC about link officers/councillors in relation to emergencies.

What actions have being taken in relation to the recommendations in the Fairness Commission relating to older people?

LR informed the OPC that the priority actions which were agreed are being taken forward by the Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities (NICE) Committee. Action: LR to ask for an update on actions for older people for the next committee meeting.

What about asbestos safety in the city?

322.11 LR explained that the council had an asbestos register of all its buildings. They have all been sealed up and checked and the register is public. She ended by explaining that while the council could not have a plan for every eventuality, its training and relationship building makes it able to deal with eventualities.

323 BUILDING OUR FUTURE

323.1 Penny Morley informed the OPC that the officers would be meeting Emma McDermott, Head of Communities to discuss funding opportunities on 31st July. Officers would then meet in August to plan an options paper for the September AGM. Penny Morley and Lynne Shields then confirmed that they would not be re-standing for their current roles. Mike Bojczuk asked if it would be possible to receive details in advance of the people who would be putting themselves forward for roles in the OPC, as he was not able to attend the AGM and would like to be able to vote in advance. **Action:** Officers of the

OPC to communicate with OPC members about the AGM and the meeting on funding opportunities, prior to the AGM.

323.2 OPC members discussed organisations that could be approached to find potential OPC recruits including the Pensioners Organisation and the Pensioners Association. Many other organisations seemed to be experiencing similar difficulties in attracting new members and choosing topics which will encourage attendees to their meetings. Other suggestions included: inviting people to become associate members (used by Age UK) and finding ways to gain support from national organisations, but in a way where one was able to retain regional autonomy. The importance of harnessing community enthusiasm and encouraging greater involvement

323.3 The OPC members then considered ways to attract more people including; reducing the number of meetings, holding fundraising and awareness raising events, focussing on a few key issues for the year. **Action:** OPC members to forward any suggestions to Penny for the options paper. OPC members to meet with Pensioners Association

323.4 It was agreed that the options paper for the September AGM would then incorporate the learning from summer and present a range of options for the future of the OPC to be voted on at the AGM.

324 OPC WORK PROGRAMME

324.1 It was agreed that Thomas Gurney who is responsible for Communications in Brighton & Hove CCG would be invited to talk to the September AGM, and the future of the OPC would be the other focus of the meeting. **Action:** OPC to notify Karen of the key issues they wished Thomas Gurney to focus on. **Action:** OPC to decide if they wish to invite Judith from Digital First to the October OPC meeting.

324.2 Actions: Karen has booked Room G70 in Hove Town Hall for the officers meeting in August. Karen has emailed ICT service desk about the OPC telephone number and will let them know when she receives a response.

325 GREY MATTERS

325.1 Colin Vincent had visited Grey Matters yesterday, which seemed to be going well and had been awarded a grant of £2,000 to update their static and portable recording equipment. Colin Vincent and Penny Morley to arrange being interviewed about the future of the OPC. It was suggested that a poster could be put on buses to raise awareness of the project and its' broadcasts and a flyer for noticeboards.

326 SECRETARY'S UPDATE

SECRETARIAL REPORT - JULY 2017

- **High Rise Housing** - Letter sent to Chief Executive raising concerns at OPC public meeting concerning fire hazards. Brighton & Hove owns 43 high rise flats

in the City with full cladding on 20 & 3 more with some form of cladding. Response from Chief Executive circulated with confirmation of updating information after further investigations at a forthcoming OPC meeting.

- **Communities , Equalities & Third Sector** - meeting arranged with Emma McDermott for Monday 31st July at 10.00 at Hove Town Hall to discuss OPC options for future.
- **Age Friendly City** - Rob Persey has confirmed that the AFC Steering Group is an important part of the Public Health Older Peoples programme and that the next meeting will remain scheduled for the 14th September.
- **AFC Forum** - The next meeting is on the 4th September at Age UK. Rob Persey requested information about the forum with the view to new appointee attending a future meeting.
- **Older People's Festival** - being organised by Impact Initiatives who have contacted us about participation in the festival. **Discuss**
- **OPC Annual Report** - OPC members were requested to provide a 200 word report of activities by 16th July. Karen has liaised with design and print team. **Discuss**
- **OPC phone line** - This seems to have been removed without any communication with ourselves. **Discuss**
- **OPC meeting dates** - the rest of 2017 confirmed as 12th September(AGM at JL), 17th October, 14th November and 12th December (JL).
- **Age UK** - Jess Sumner has been appointed to lead Community Works and will therefore be leaving Age UK. Age UK have advertised for an interim Chief Executive.
- **Private Rented Sector Consultation** - BHCC is currently consulting on a city wide Additional Licensing Scheme for the whole city. Consultation closes on the 10th September.
- **Possability People** - holding an Open Day on Monday 26th July at 14 Windelsham Avenue between 10 and 3.00.
- **Theatre Royal** - want to meet us and discuss events and they have a Matinee Club. On Thursday 20th July they have a star of the West End Shirley Valentine in discussion also includes tea and cake for £6.

327 MEMBERS' UPDATE

COLIN VINCENT

17/6/17 Attended STP Working Group Meeting

Evelyn Barker, Manager Director Brighton & Hove University Hospital Trust and a Board member, gave an update on current situation. The acute Trust now involved in discussions on STP. The hospital remains in special measures both clinical and financial. A Consultants report commissioned by the Trust indicates a shortage of 78 beds. Wards in the Emerton building closed, deemed as unsuitable by CQC. However new beds will become available in an Emergency Floor building in September. Current staff vacancies situation: 104 Nurses and 150 for Assistants.

Meeting open to the public, in addition to questions raised by HOSC working group members and others from members of Defend the NHS. I asked inter alia about the future of the RACOP Clinic. The Rapid Assessment Centre for Older People, Ms Barber replied that the Trust had no plans to close any services.

22/6/17 Health & Social Care Networking Meeting

Organised jointly by the CCG Health & Partnership Board and Community Works to discuss new ways of delivering care and attended by a plethora of voluntary service provider organisations and Council officers involved in commissioning H & S C services Jane Lodge who co-ordinated the proceedings stated that the CCG was conducting a review of all secondary care contracts it had with voluntary organisations. The event programme included group sessions where participants were asked to consider case studies and to suggest what range of care services could be provided to meet their individual needs.

At some stage in the proceedings the dreaded phrase “ service redesign ”was used which usually equates to a reduction in cost and the quality of service provided

11/7/17 Attended extraordinary meeting of the SENPec Committee at the Unite Offices in Crawley called to regenerate the interest of the Regions affiliated membership of retired groups in the campaigning activities of the National Pensioners Convention. Number of suggestions adopted which will be carried forward to the AGM
In September.

13/7/17 Keeping People Healthy event

Organised by CCG with the aim of supporting people in the city afflicted by health issues leading to early

Deaths majority in areas of economic deprivation; e.g. Smoking, Obesity, Drug and Alcohol Misuse , Cancer, Programmes including one to one support on offer outlined by representatives of Professional and Voluntary organisations.

17/7/17 Grey Matters Planning Meeting

Full programme of interviews either on tape for broadcasting or in the course of preparation. Have agreed to assist in an updating interview with the Men In Sheds project leader and participants at their workshop, interview to be arranged with Penny and myself to inform listeners about the OPC situation.

Francis Tonks

- Was to attend a Pensioners Association meeting in August
- Recently sang for Grey Matters in Active Singing for Better Health, at a recent celebration attracting 100 people
- Still participating in the ASC Self-Funders project between Brighton University and Age UK. This met regularly and was networking with other areas.

Mike Bojczuk

- Continuing to work with Albion in the Community on skin cancer awareness at events such as Paddle Round the Pier

- Digital Awareness work at the Whitehawk Festival and there is an app which is linked to My Life <https://www.mylifebh.org.uk/>
- Helping again at Kings College Hospital in palliative care research
- SVP are about to take over Tower House and are aiming for a September re-opening after cleaning out the site. It will target older people across the city, initially offering lunch clubs and will have a limited access to transport

Michael Whitty

- Opening day 18th June for the Friends of Westdene Green. They will hold lunches for older people.
- Attended the Maycroft Manor care home barbecue
- 12th July attended the NHS digital conference at Brighthelm which had useful information on digital equipment which can be used e.g. to renew prescriptions. Particularly useful as 80% currently telephone to book doctor's appointments
- 13th July chaired a LAT meeting re: identifying lonely residents
- 18th July attended Withdean and Patcham Area Network. In process of producing a second newsletter which will be sent out to 10,000 older people in August and will cover issues such as fire safety and scams on vulnerable people. Action: MW to send MB an electronic copy to put on OPC website
- 22nd July to attend Maycroft Manor garden party

Lynne Shields

- June 22nd I attended the Health and Social Care Network at Community Base. Invaluable for updates on Caring Together and the latest on the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) July 4th The Big Health Conversation at The Dome. Made recommendation that the information shared at the event should be rolled out as "roadshows" (specifically in Whitehawk and Queens Park - my wards) I have since confirmed with community workers in Whitehawk that this is happening in September.
- July 6th Friends of Brighton and Hove Hospitals. Launch of a new project in support of older patients. They are raising a lot of money for small but significant projects.
- July 6th Attended my Local Action Team Meeting at St Johns Cornerstone.
- July 10th An evaluation of the Age Friendly City Falls Prevention programme at Hove Town Hall. By an external company employed by ROSPER.
- July 12th Safeguarding training for Healthwatch (I am a volunteer on the Enter and View programme).
- July 18th OPC Meeting at Hove Town Hall
- July 20th Involved in Age UK B and H research (medicine acquisition and use) July 24th Healthwatch interview with practice manager of a service for the homeless and those living in temporary accommodation.

John Eyles

Via E.S.T committee 27/06 discussed items:-

- * Mazda fountain still under discussion with Valley Gardens scheme. Green areas and space for events, re-comm: approval funding not yet identified.
- * Clarity required on process for road closures for community events

- * 45 tons of litter left on beach after holiday weekend. 50 new bins to be installed with extra staff via City-clean.
- * Possible clean-air charges for diesel vehicles.
- * Open spaces strategy to establish a Parks Foundation for fund raising and re-investment to parks and tennis provision. Who will be members and chair.
- * Allotments and watering to be limited to attended systems within a time period, possible subsidised bins for water containers.
- * Possible recharge for re-establishment of green areas after events currently no past charging. Suggested to ring-fence monies raised from hire of parks to re-invest with City Parks.
- * Biosphere needs new identity and will hold seminars in October.
- * Air quality Govt draft consultation report due end of July.
- * Hove cemetery toilets, N side closed due to lack of use and budgetary decisions reconsideration refused.
- * Francis street revisions/Hanover and Elm grove/Craven vale traffic reviews in process.
- * Balfour Road/Preston Village traffic parking schemes to proceed to implementation.
- * Tender for Bus Lane cameras in hand for 2yrs + 3yrs extendable.
- * Hove Station/Gardens proposals on hold and referred to the District Valuer for re-assessment of 'affordable housing' elements

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328 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting concluded at 1.10pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of