

Northampton Pensioners' Forum

on Thursday, 6 February 2014 at 2:00 pm until not later than 4:00 pm
in The Godwin Room, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE.

Agenda

1. **Welcomes, Introductions and Apologies**
2. **Minutes and Matters Arising**
3. **Taking the Forum forward**
 - (A) **Code of Conduct**
 - (B) **Action Plans**
 - (C) **Events Calendar**
4. **Northampton Bus Station - Steve Burd**
5. **Local Council Tax Support - Steve Archer**
6. **Community News Exchange**
7. **Any Other Business**
8. **Suggestions for Items for Future Meetings or Forum Activities**
9. **Date and venues of future Forum Meetings**

Map and directions at: www.northampton.gov.uk/guildhall

For more information about this meeting please contact:
Alice Morgan, Community Development Officer



alicemorgan@northampton.gov.uk



Tel: 01604 837795



More information about the Forum generally is at: www.northampton.gov.uk/forums



Facebook page: www.northampton.gov.uk/pensionersforumonfacebook

Please note that this Forum is supported and funded by Northampton Borough Council. The Forum may work in partnership and collaboration with other community groups, councils and local services from time to time. The views expressed and decisions taken by the Forum are not necessarily those of Northampton Borough Council.



Northampton Borough Council

Northampton Pensioners' Forum

Thursday, 12 December 2013

Present: Roger Rumsey (Co-Chair), Councillor Brian Oldham (Co-Chair), Jean Anderton, Mary Dyer-Atkins, Mike Hill, Tony Mallard, Brian Nichols, Christiana Owuss-Akuffo, Norman Sharp and Ann Timson.

Sonia Bray (Northamptonshire Healthwatch), Tony Simmons (Stagecoach Northampton Operations Manager), Alice Morgan (Community Development Officer) and Vicki Rockall (Partnerships and Community Manager).

1. WELCOMES AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Sandra Frampton, Harry Tuttle, Hazel Tuttle and Jacqueline Forrest-Smith.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2013 were agreed as a true record.

It was noted that the Council had agreed the transfer of its housing stock to a new Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) on 9 December 2013 and that a presentation on the subject would be made to the next meeting (6 February 2014). Councillor Oldham commented that the transfer had been supported by all groups involved and there had been support from all political parties.

It was noted that the consultation on the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme had now been completed and a presentation would be made to the Forum's next meeting.

A member stated that the comment about more robust control being required of Council contractors did not fully convey the problems tenants had faced during the works carried out by contractors. She stated that she had raised the problems with the Cabinet Member for Housing who had said she would look into them. The Interim Head of Landlord Services, Richard Birchett, had given his details at the last meeting, as set out below, and asked tenants to contact him if they had any concerns regarding contractors: rbirchett@northampton.gov.uk, 01604 838955.

DISCUSSIONS

HEALTHWATCH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE: SONIA BRAY

This item was added after the agenda had been published.

Sonia Bray stated that Healthwatch England was the new independent consumer champion for health and social care in England, with Healthwatch Northamptonshire

being the county organisation. Healthwatch Northamptonshire would collect views and opinions on health and social care services from users, carers and the general public, challenge decision-making processes and make constructive criticisms and could make Enter and View visits to health and social care facilities which had at least one publicly funded user. Further information on the organisation is available at: www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk.

Volunteers were invited to engage with Healthwatch Northamptonshire and to contribute views and evidence which could be used to build up a picture of the health and social care services provided in the county. There were also opportunities to become involved in one of the Healthwatch working groups and as an Enter and View volunteer.

Sonia Bray asked if members had any issues which they wished to raise regarding health and social care issues. The following items were raised:

- Problems with waiting times for appointments
- Delays in obtaining health and social care services;
- More joined up working between health and social care services;
- Better support of patients after discharge from hospital;
- Unnecessary visits to A and E services, resulting in very long waits;
- More information, including leaflets, for patients entering hospital;

Sonia Bray said action was being taken regarding more joined up working, and referred to a new initiative for supporting frail and elderly patients in their own homes, to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions, and after discharge from hospital.

Members asked if a member of the Social Care Working Group could be asked to sit on the Forum as this would be helpful.

NORTHAMPTON BUS INTERCHANGE: TONY SIMMONS (STAGECOACH NORTHAMPTON OPERATIONS MANAGER)

Tony Simmons, Stagecoach Northampton Operations Manager, attended the meeting to answer questions about the new North Gate Bus Station. He stated that the bus station would have 14 bays, and 8 bays on the Drapery, unlike the 28 in the Greyfriars bus station. This would reduce bus wait over times to five minutes and some minor timetable adjustments would be required, which were currently being tested. Bus services would be prioritised, with the heaviest used services in the areas with most waiting room for passengers. Some services would need to share bays and different services to the same areas would use the same bay or ones near together wherever possible. There would be a maximum of six services per hour from any bay. The bus station would be used by all bus operators with services into Northampton but would remain the responsibility of the Borough Council. The site would be handed over to Stagecoach in January 2014 to make internal arrangements and to train staff, to open for services in early March 2014.

Mr Simmons stated that this was not the ideal site to build a bus station but was the best of the available sites within the town centre which the Council considered.

A Forum member expressed concern at the number of vehicle and pedestrian movement which would take place around the bus station and issues which might be caused in terms of the length of buses. He asked to meet Mr Simmons outside the meeting to discuss these issues. It was noted that the highway authority and police had not expressed concern over these issues and management, supervisors and bus drivers had been consulted on the proposals. A mock up of the proposals had also been tested at Sixfields.

Some comments were made about the size and clarity of the map contained in the agenda. A Forum member also referred to the plans of the bus station, which had been approved by the Council's Planning Committee in July 2013.

Timetables for services would be made available once finalised and would be distributed. Information on "where to board your bus" would be set up in the Drapery. .

In answer to questions Mr Simmons stated that:

- There had been some issues with the heating matrix on some buses causing them to be too cold. Heating on buses were switched on by engineers and involved a judgment call regarding likely temperatures. New buses were being checked as they arrived. Any on-going issues should be reported to Mr Simmons.
- Speed and acceleration patterns of buses were monitored on an on-going basis using GPS technology and any allegation of poos driving standards were fully investigated. GPS data is also used being used checked as part of the route time trials. CCTV is fitted to the majority of Stagecoach's bus fleet and will be provided on all the 46 new vehicles arriving.
- In bus stations, for safety reasons, drivers were not allowed to open the doors to admit passengers once reverse gear had been engaged. At bus stops once the driver had started moving off procedures it was a judgment call for drivers to make if it was safe to abort the departure and allow additional passengers to board the vehicle.

It was **agreed** that Mr Simmons be asked to provide bus timetables to the next meeting of the Forum, on 6 February 2014.

5. COMMUNITY NEWS EXCHANGE

Members of the Forum provided information and updates, as summarised below:

- A Forum member had received a telephone call using her name and to an unlisted directory from one of the contractors working for the Council. As she had not agreed that these details should be released she had raised this issue with the Cabinet Member for Housing and with the main contractor, both of whom said they would look into the matter.
- Number plates were being stolen from cars and owners should be wary if this.
- A Forum member had received a parking ticket at the hospital having parked

in an area without warning notices when the disabled parking bays were all full.

- Councillor Oldham confirmed, in answer to a question, that Enterprise were now operating under the Amey name.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A Forum member expressed concern that the House of Fraser was closing in the Grosvenor Centre and the shop would be split into two units. He stated that shoppers in wheelchairs relied on the lift in House of Fraser for access between the two floors of the Centre. It was noted that there was lift access between the floors in Boots.

A Forum member stated that there had been an issue recently regarding his son's garage. He had contacted the Interim Head of Landlord Services, Richard Birchett, who had quickly resolved the issue.

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OR FORUM ACTIVITIES

The Forum was asked if they wished to hold an extra meeting on 16 January 2014 to comment on the Council's proposed budget, which would be considered by Cabinet on 18 December 2013 and full Council on 24 February 2014 or wait until the next meeting of the Forum on 6 February 2014.

Alice Morgan said she would send out invitations regarding the days when the other Forums would be receiving presentations on the budget and also for the public meeting on the budget.

It was **agreed** that a special meeting of the Forum be held on 16 January 2014 to comment on the Council's proposed budget.

8. DATE AND VENUES OF FUTURE FORUM MEETINGS

The Chair wished everyone a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

The next meeting of the Forum would be held on 6 February 2014.

The meeting concluded at 4:04 pm

Northampton Borough Council

Northampton Pensioners' Forum

Thursday, 16 January 2014

Present: Cllr. Oldham (Co-chair), Roger Rumsey (Co-chair), Cllr. Bottwood (Cabinet member for Finance), Ann Timson (Spring Borough Residents Association), Tony Mallard (Eastfield Residents Association), Norman Sharp, Brian Nichols.

1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Christiana Owusu-Akuffo, Mike Hill, Mary Dyer-Atkins, and Jean Anderton.

2. BUDGET 2014/15 - CLLR. BOTTWOOD

Cllr. Bottwood gave an introduction to his role and the background to the budget in terms of debt and changes which have been put forward in order to stream line services.

Cllr. Oldham said that when managing budgets in the authority, it is important that the books do not go into debt. Authorities do not have the choice to go without, services still need to be provided that the people want. There is a restriction on what the authority can spend, cannot go above what the central Government provides.

Cllr. Bottwood spoke about the borough, 2014-18/19, if we do absolutely nothing, 2018/19 we will have a £9.6 million gap (33%). Current reserves are £3.1 million. Therefore we have to bring in some measures to cut spending and increase income.

AT raised the issue of Decent Homes Standard and the spending of money to replace kitchens etc. in council homes where new kitchen isn't wanted. This is where cuts can be made. Cllr. Bottwood explained that there are two separate parts of the budget, the General Fund and the budget for Housing. The way the Government has structured housing means that funding for housing is ring fenced. This money for housing has to be spent on homes, which includes the Decent Homes Fund from Government. This money has to be used in a prescribed amount of time, and wouldn't be able to move this grant over to general fund. If it is not spent, the Government would ask for money back.

Cllr. Bottwood went through the Budget in a Minute. This information can be found here: <http://www.northampton.gov.uk/budget2014>

Questions and Feedback of the Forum:

Parking

NS asked why NCC not doing anything around Parking meters on street? Cllr

Bottwood said that NBC are working hard to get NCC to do the same as us. However, due to their budget constraints also and own priorities, they are not able to reduce charges. Have to consider Whole County and not just the town.

Business Incentive Scheme

TM thought it was a good idea to cut parking charges and to introduce the business incentive scheme. TM suggested that empty shops are rented out on a short lease to art groups and voluntary groups to stop them looking empty. Also, TM suggested Arts Markets on Sundays are a good way to encourage more into the town on a Sunday. Cllr. Bottwood said that if the empty shops are Council owned, then this suggestion is easy to do, however landlords of those properties would be reluctant as they want long term tenants. The key would be to get more people into the town, and make the town more attractive, so that people are coming to the town to have a day out, as well as coming to shop. As a result, we would then be in a better position to look at increasing business.

Cllr. Bottwood highlighted that there is a lot going on with Northampton Business. Have a look at Northampton Alive and you will see examples of things taking place which will make the town look more attractive, encourage more businesses to come to our town and move the town forward in the right direction.

Museums

AT asked what the opening hours would be and what the increase of events would be. Cllr Bottwood advised that this has not been decided yet, as this is only a proposal, but NBC would test opening the museums more and increase opening hours through the year to identify if the demand is there.

Staff Terms and Conditions

RR said that is it visible that all across the country services are being contracted out and that the core business of a local authority is shrinking. Why is the chief exec of council's salary not shrinking? Cllr. Bottwood answered this question, highlighting that over the last 3 years, NBC have reduced senior management and saved a lot of money. Cllr Bottwood highlighted that this is not about cutting jobs, but about making services more effective. NBC are continuing to look at cutting costs without cutting out staff to try and make sure services do not suffer.

TM asked whether the ALMO will take out costs? Cllr. Bottwood said that staff costs in this area would be saved but still have to put money into the ALMO.

Abington Street

NS highlighted the dispute between Abington Street being opened and not opened and asked whether saving the £3 million proposed spent on this would solve the

budget gap problem. Cllr Bottwood discussed the difference between Capital and Revenue, and that therefore this Capital save would not change the budget gap. With response to the dispute of whether or not to open up Abington Street, NBC has only said they will open it as people have said they wanted it. In a consultation, 388 letters went out, and only 12 responses were received: 9 against, 2 for and 1 not bothered.

NS asked whether the shops on the street have been consulted. Cllr. Bottwood advised that he is not in a position to answer this, and that Cllr Hadland as portfolio holder for this area would be more appropriate to invite to the forum to discuss this further and in more detail.

Cllr. Oldham told the forum that at the last cabinet meeting, this issue was raised. With regards to the café there, they will not lose their pavement areas, as pavements will be wide enough to still have outdoor seating. RR further advised that this was in the manifesto of Conservatives when running for Council.

Cllr. Bottwood also highlighted to the forum the benefit of having better access for older people at the top of Abington Street – better access..

BN raised a number of queries that he would like a response to:

- How much have the Borough have got to play with?
- How much funding NBC are getting from central government? Cllr. Bottwood advised that the exact figure was not yet known.
- With reference to the staff savings – have the unions been spoken to? Cllr. Bottwood advised that the process is continuing, and unions are aware that this is an ongoing process.
- What will happen to the statue on Abington Street?
- Do NBC pay women less than men like Birmingham City Council? Cllr. Bottwood said that he wouldn't like to comment on this due to not being his area of work, however there are a large amount of female staff in management and executive roles in NBC. Cllr. Oldham also stated that he was not aware that this is the case in Northampton.

It was agreed that a written response could be given to BN if required. BN stated that he was happy with the figures but would have liked some more credit figures. AT agreed. It was raised that suggestions are good but they do not have substance or exact figures. It was questioned when these figures would be made available. Cllr. Bottwood stated that the problem with this is that all proposals are draft figures – some figures are included in the 'Budget in a Minute' papers. Cllr. Oldham notified

the forum that the rubber stamping of budget is on the 24th February.

AOB

NONE

4. DATE AND VENUES OF FUTURE FORUM MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting is on Thursday, 6th February from 14:00-16:00.

The meeting concluded at 15:30

Code of Conduct for the Forums

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards that the Forums expect of its members. It aims to provide members with an effective ethical framework in which to do business. It is not intended to be exhaustive, or to cover every eventuality, but sets out some common sense requirements to enable the forums to function smoothly and successfully

1. Meeting Etiquette

As an attendee you must comply with the following requirements and any others that may be stated from time to time:

- 1.1** Contribute positively to discussions concerning the issues of the meeting
- 1.2** Be friendly, polite, courteous and respectful at all times to fellow members, and others present
- 1.3** Not insult, abuse or use offensive language or behaviour
- 1.4** Comply with Northampton Borough Councils Equal Opportunities Policy
- 1.5** Demonstrate actively that you are interested in and care about the issue that you are discussing and want to make a positive difference
- 1.6** Show respect for buildings, facilities and equipment being used
- 1.7** Speak only through the Chairman of the meeting and not interrupt, heckle, make distracting noises or gestures
- 1.8** Speak clearly into any microphone provided and comply with any instructions given about its use

2. Being Objective

- 2.1** Your own experience and views should inform, but not dominate or dictate how you participate.
- 2.2** If you have a specific issue with regards to a service matter to raise these can be discussed with a member of staff at the end of the each meeting or you can ask for the appropriate officer details. Meetings attended by other residents are not the place to raise any issues of this nature.
- 2.3** Being Fair
- 2.4** You must have and show respect for the people you deal with, and take their circumstances and personal differences into account. This is about putting equality into practice. The key is simply to respect differences fairly, so that you do not exclude anyone, or treat anyone inappropriately or unfairly because of their particular circumstances.

Breaching the Code of Conduct

If any person's behaviour breaches this Code of Conduct, they will be required to leave the meeting and vacate the premises where it is being held. They will not be permitted to attend future meetings unless they provide satisfactory evidence to Northampton Borough Council that they will comply with the Code – e.g. a letter of apology.

If you would like further information or if you would like to discuss the Code of Conduct please contact Vicki Rockall, Partnerships and Communities Manager at vrockall@northampton.gov.uk or on 01604 837074

COMMUNITY EVENTS 2014

DATE	NAME OF EVENT	DATE	NAME OF EVENT	DATE	NAME OF EVENT	DATE	NAME OF EVENT
8th October 11:00-13:00	Northampton Women's Forum <i>Godwin Room, Guildhall</i>	2nd December 12:00-12:30	World Aid's Day Civic Ceremony <i>Courtyard, Guildhall</i>	27th January 12:00-12:30	Holocaust Memorial Day Civic Ceremony <i>Courtyard, Guildhall</i>	26th February	Northampton Youth Forum <i>The Guildhall</i>
11th October	International Coming Out Day Supported by LGBTQ Forum <i>Northampton Museum</i>	3rd December 18:00-20:00	Northampton Women's Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>	18:30-20:00	Evening Event Supported by Youth Forum <i>Great Hall, Guildhall</i>	8th March TBC	International Women's Day Supported by the Women's Forum <i>Northampton Museum</i>
16th October 17:30-19:30	Northampton Disabled People's Forum <i>Godwin Room, Guildhall</i>	12th December 14:00-16:00	Northampton Pensioner's Forum <i>Jeffrey Room, Guildhall</i>	28th January 11:00-13:00	Northampton Women's Forum <i>Jeffrey Room, Guildhall</i>	11th March 18:30-20:30	Northampton LGBTQ Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>
29th October	Northampton Youth Forum <i>The Guildhall</i>	19th December	Northampton Youth Forum <i>The Guildhall</i>	18:30-20:30	Northampton LGBTQ Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>	13th March 18:30-20:30	Northampton Diverse Communities Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>
31st October 14:00-16:00	Northampton Pensioner's Forum <i>Jeffrey Room, Guildhall</i>	3rd January	Northampton Youth Forum <i>The Guildhall</i>	February	LGBTQ History Month	20th March 14:00-16:00	Northampton Pensioner's Forum <i>Jeffrey Room, Guildhall</i>
12th November 18:30-20:30	Northampton LGBTQ Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>	16th January 14:00-15:00	Northampton Pensioners Forum Special Budget Meeting <i>Jeffrey Room, Guildhall</i>	6th February 14:00-16:00	Northampton Pensioners Forum <i>Godwin Room, Guildhall</i>	25th March 17:30-19:30	Northampton Disabled People's Forum <i>TBA</i>
19th November 17:30-19:30	Northampton Disabled People's Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>	21st January 17:30-19:30	Northampton Disabled Peoples Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>	14th February TBC	FAN Valentines Event Supported by LBGTQ Forum <i>NN Cafe</i>	16th April	Northampton Youth Forum <i>The Guildhall</i>
23rd November 12:00-20:00	Break the Shire Supported by Northampton Youth Forum <i>Great Hall, Guildhall</i>	23rd January 18:30-20:30	Northampton Diverse Communities Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>	18th February 17:30-19:30	Northampton Disabled People's Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>	May	Mental Health Awareness Month Various Youth Forum Activity

COMMUNITY EVENTS 2014

DATE	NAME OF EVENT	DATE	NAME OF EVENT	DATE	NAME OF EVENT	DATE	NAME OF EVENT
7th May 11:00-13:00	Northampton Women's Forum <i>Jeffrey Room, Guildhall</i>	8th July 18:30-20:30	Northampton LGBTQ Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>				
16th May TBC	International Day Against Homophobia <i>TBC</i>	22nd July 17:30-19:30	Northampton Disabled People's Forum <i>TBA</i>				
20th May 18:30-20:30	Northampton LGBTQ Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>	30th July 18:30-20:30	Northampton Diverse Communities Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>				
27th May 17:30-19:30	Northampton Disabled People's Forum <i>TBA</i>	12th August	International Youth Day Youth Forum Activity <i>TBA</i>				
28th May	Northampton Youth Forum <i>The Guildhall</i>	16th/17th August	The Umbrella Fair Northampton LGBTQ Forum Tent <i>The Racecourse</i>				
4th June 18:30-20:30	Northampton Diverse Communities Forum <i>Holding Room, Guildhall</i>						
5th June 14:00-16:00	Northampton Pensioner's Forum <i>Jeffrey Room, Guildhall</i>						
14th June	Northampton Carnival Supported by ... Forum <i>TBA</i>						

Please note that some events that are highlighted in yellow is from our partner agencies. For more information please call the number above