

Pensioners' Forum News

December 2010

Introduction

Welcome to the December 2010 edition of our newsletter. The purpose of this is to update you with news about the activities of the Forum, local services and opportunities. We hope that it will be of interest to everyone, although some of the content is specifically aimed at older people. **Please note our next meeting is now on 27 January 2011:** it includes NBC Budget Consultation and an update on changes the council wants to make to how community centres are run in Northampton.

News further to the Pensioners' Forum meeting on 16 December 2010

Royal and Derngate Theatres: update and ideas to help more older people use the theatres

Cllr David Perkins, trustee of the theatres and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, explained key differences between the two theatres: at The Royal Theatre work is produced and commissioned; at the Derngate work is 'bought in'. Both theatres are registered charities and receive funding from a number of sources. They have one of the lowest amount of subsidies of any regional not-for-profit theatre in the country.

Facts and Figures about the Royal and Derngate:

- Total economic contribution the Royal and Derngate theatres made to the region in 2009/10 was £21 million.
- The Royal and Derngate are the most commercially successful theatres outside of the West End.
- The average number of times a visitor attends the theatre per year is 1.42 times.
- 75% of the total income is received from non-grants-funded income streams.
- The theatres recently celebrated two wins in two categories at the Theatrical Management Association.

Concessions are available, including for Under 16s, people age 60+ and disabled people. Group discounts are available for groups of more than 10 people. At the Derngate, much of the money from tickets goes to the promoters of the shows. Sometimes promoters do not allow standby tickets to be sold and restrict the concessions allowed.

Members of the Forum gave feedback on their experiences of the theatres and ideas to help the theatres with their ambition of encouraging more people to use them more often.

As a result Cllr Perkins agreed to feedback to the other trustees:

- the idea for a 'pensioners' performance' where they would set the ticket price; and
- whether they have a 'mystery shopper' scheme in which older people may be able to volunteer and so get free access to productions across the theatres etc.

Reminder: you are invited to the Northampton Older People's Health Forum: 21 January 2pm – 4pm at Northampton Guildhall:

Items for discussion are the NHS White Paper and Northamptonshire County Council Budget Consultation. All welcome. No need to book.



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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 Budget Consultation

The Forum decided to bring forward its next meeting to 27 January 2011, 2pm to 4pm in order that it can be formally consulted on the proposed council budget. All welcome. No need to book.

Detailed financial information is available to view, and the consultation survey can be completed, online by 31 January 2011, at www.northampton.gov.uk/difficultchoices

If people would like help to complete the survey, would prefer to respond by telephone, or would like a paper copy of the consultation survey they should telephone the council on 01604 837837.

A public consultation meeting is to be held on 26 January 2011 at 7pm at Northampton Guildhall. All welcome. No need to book.

Invitation: Holocaust Memorial Day in Northampton: 27th January 2011

Members of the Forum are invited to attend the Holocaust Memorial Day activities on 27 January 2011. This is an international day to remember those who have been murdered in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, such as in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur – and to learn from the past to help build safer, stronger communities today.

11am – 12pm Flower-laying memorial ceremony in the Guildhall courtyard

7pm – 8.30pm (latest) Event in the Great Hall of Northampton Guildhall including performances by young people, candle-lighting and remembrance activities.

27 January to 5 March 2011 Exhibition about the hidden Jewish history of people in Northampton, in the People's Gallery at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, Guildhall Road. Free admission during normal opening times (Tues to Sat 10am – 5pm and Sun 2pm – 5pm).

Keeping Warm in Winter

Last year it was estimated that over 25,000 people died in the UK as a result of illnesses linked to the cold weather. There are some things you can do to help keep warm this winter.

- Wear lots of layers rather than one chunky layer
- Eat at least one hot meal a day
- Have regular hot drinks and try to keep your energy levels up
- Keep your curtains closed and doors shut to keep the warmth in and the drafts out
- Try to keep the temperature above 18°C (65°F) in your bedroom overnight
- Put on a coats, hats, scarves, gloves and warm shoes or boots when you go outside
- Switch your electric blanket on before getting in to bed

If you are worried about a relative or an elderly neighbour, contact Age UK Advice on 0800 169 6565. For health advice contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or visit them at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places and 2011 Elections

The Boundary Commission has made some big changes to Northampton Borough Council ward boundaries. These new wards will be used for the May 2011 elections. Many of the polling stations will remain the same - they are large enough and accessible for disabled people. It's proposed to use some mobile polling stations as the only option where there are no alternative suitable premises available. The council would like to hear (by 4 Feb 2011) from people who have expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for people with different types of disability – especially any suggestions for alternative places that may be used as polling stations. More details at www.northampton.gov.uk/consultations or from Electoral Services tel: 01604 837111 or email: elecereg@northampton.gov.uk .

Financial Help in the Winter

If you have reached the qualifying age you may get a Winter Fuel Payment to help pay for keeping warm in winter.

Last year, 267 people aged over 65 died in Northamptonshire from fuel poverty. IF you can afford to forgo your winter fuel payment this winter, please donate it to Fuel Northamptonshire to help those who need more support this winter.

You can find out more about this scheme at Northamptonshire Community Foundation www.ncf.uk.com/News/Latest_News/fuelaid or tel: 01604 230033.

Concerns about changes to running of community centres

Some members of Forum are involved with running community centres and/or with activities that happen at them. They raised concerns at the Dec 2010 meeting about the proposed changes to how community centres are run and possible impacts on groups who use them now.

As a result, the Head of Service and the relevant officer responsible for this area of work have agreed to attend the January forum meeting to provide an update and talk with the Forum about their plans.

Forum attendance in November 2010 included:

Roger Rumsey (Co-Chair), Madeline Boys, Harry Tuttle (Pensioners' Voice) Hazel Tuttle (Pensioners' Voice), Audrey Taylor, Joyce Smith, Mike Hill, Bridget Gibson (Link), Liz Percival, Lindsey Ambrose (NBC), Cllr David Perkins, Cllr David Garlick, Cllr Jane Hollis

Apologies: B Nichols, M Dyer-Atkins, J Anderton, J Wright

Would you like to join the Forum?

Membership enables you to receive information by email or post about meetings, consultations, events etc so you can be actively involved with Northampton Borough Council and take part in dialogue about services. To join please contact Lindsey Ambrose, the Forum's co-ordinator:
tel/text: 0779 53 33 687 or tel: 01604 837566
or email: lambrose@northampton.gov.uk

Or write to us at: Northampton Pensioners' Forum, NBC, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE

Pensioners' Forum agenda-style meetings

Open to all. Meetings are from 2pm to 4pm at Northampton Guildhall on:

- 27 January 2011
- 9 June 2011

There is a big gap between meetings because for legal reasons, the Forum cannot meet in the period before local elections, which take place on Thursday 5 May.

Please let us know if you need agendas in large print or other particular format to meet your disability needs. Disabled access information for the Guildhall: www.northampton.gov.uk/disabledgo or contact the Guildhall Office tel: 01604 838400 or email: guildhalloffice@northampton.gov.uk

Northampton Pensioners' Forum on Facebook

Responding to the fact more older people are using the internet, including Facebook, and the ease of sharing information that way, a Facebook page has been set up which is free to join. News may be posted by anyone at any time, including invitations to events, funding opportunities and opportunities to have your say on local and national consultations. The easy web address for the Facebook page is:

www.northampton.gov.uk/pensionersforumonfacebook

This is in addition to the Forums' information on the NBC web pages at www.northampton.gov.uk/forums