

Northampton Borough Council - Northampton Pensioners' Forum

Thursday, 21 July 2016 2-4pm

1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Present: Cllr Oldham (CO, Co Chair NBC), Roger Rumsey (RR, Co Chair), Ann Timson (AT Independent), Hazel Tuttle (HT, Independent), Alice Morgan (AM, NBC), Mike Hill (MH, Independent), Tony Mallard (TM, NBC), Nisha Mejer *(NM, NBC), David Hewitt (DH, Independent), Veronica Male (VM, Tollers and Northamptonshire Dementia Action Alliance), Maureen Hill (MHill, Individual), Malcolm Mildren (MM, Individual), Jeanette Pidgen (JP, Nene CCG), Julie Hayward (Care & Repair JH), John Rawling (Quakers JR), Joy Beese (Individual JB), Brian Nicholls (Independent BN), Cllr Stephen Hibbert (Cabinet Member for Housing SH), Phil Harris (Head of Housing and Wellbeing PH), F Nelson (Individual FN), D Nelson (Individual DN),

*Took minutes

Apologies: J Forrest-Smith, Christina Owusu – Akuffo

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Mayor tea dance has been postponed until September.

Amendment – item 6 – men had accessed garden.

3. PHIL HARRIS - HEAD OF HOUSING AND WELLBEING

PH: Is Head of Housing. Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) was created to manage the housing stock on behalf of NBC. Some of housing was retained by NBC and PH manages this. Services which are included are housing, money services, private sector housing, disabled facilities grants and homelessness. There are 40 people in the team.

The team has produced a multi-agency strategy to tackle homelessness. The strategy brings together an alliance of more than 30 local agencies behind the common aim of ending the need for people to sleep rough on the streets of Northampton.

The number of people who are homeless has increased by 50% over the last 5 years nationally.

In February 2016 a workshop was held with partner groups from voluntary, private, charity and faith based local agencies. On March 24th a count was carried out between 12am -3am and 21 people were found sleeping rough. There are probably more.

A second workshop was held in April and the group is now working on an action plan with 10 objectives. We are hoping to have less than 10 people sleeping rough.

We recruited 2 outreach workers who are in the process of reconnecting and engaging with people including people from the Eastern European communities.

Half of the people homeless from the Eastern European communities are not exercising their Treaty rights. They are encouraged to do this and given every opportunity to do this. However, they will be returned to their country if they don't.

People leave organisations such as hospitals and prisons in an unplanned way. This is now being reviewed.

A temporary night shelter will be set up in autumn and the message is being given that people do not need to sleep rough. We are seeking support from other organisations so that there is more joined up working. There will be an information sharing protocol.

There are opportunities for social enterprise and support will be given to build self-esteem.

TM: Do you anticipate a rise in homelessness and questioned how landlords conduct themselves.

PH: There are changes to Housing Benefit and private rental market can also change. This can cause problems. When tenancy comes to an end, landlords can charge more as there is a huge demand. Not all are rogue landlords.

AT: How can you persuade people to help themselves?

PH: We have to keep our promises. We are trying to make the homeless people keep their appointments. The outreach workers are always building trust and this does take a long time.

In regards to the temporary night shelter, the former British Rail Social Club will be used. The capacity of the Railway club is 25. It will be probably be men only. We are aware that this is not popular. But we do believe that this will be successful.

4. CLLR HIBBERT - CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

SH: Congratulated PH on the hard work that Paul and his team do.

Northampton Partnership Homes have day to day management of the housing stock and SH gets involved on strategic matters or if any issues arise.

SH attends the landlord's forum and is always encouraging more support. Making plans to go ahead with social letting agency. The dept. is also progressing with Older Persons strategy which will be going to cabinet for agreement. We are currently assessing and would like a housing stock plan to be put in place.

VM: The Alzheimer's Society has introduced a charter for people with dementia.

ACTION: VM to send contact details to SH.

DH: How many people currently on the housing waiting list?

SH: There are approx. 4 thousand. The trend is slightly upwards. The rumour that we are going to sell 500 bungalows is untrue.

MH: Do you review how many empty homes there are?

SH: Yes. We try to take up empty properties and put them back in use.

PH: will be developing a plan for empty houses and new policy will be brought in to encourage people to put houses into use.

DH: There is a shortage of affordable houses. Need more council homes. We used to have good neighbour schemes.

SH: Have faith in this government. This government is committing billions of pounds to new housing.

5. JEANETTE PIDGEN - LOCALITY MANAGER NENE CCG

Three things were identified from the previous meeting:

Dementia Services – on hold at the moment.

Pat Haslem from Nene Clinical Commissioning Group would like to attend the next Pensioners Forum meeting. She is a veteran of the Armed forces Community Covenant. Pat attends the meeting to ensure health services are put in place.

Quality contract will be refreshed and reviewed. Different contracts will be pulled together for more efficiency.

6. COMMUNITY NEWS EXCHANGE

AT: An elderly couple had burst pipes and had no hot water. The plumber said that "hot water is not an emergency. " The matter took 4 days to be resolved. Not acceptable for people who have disability.

NPH do not have sufficient information and they have incomplete surveys. Incomplete surveys are passed on to sub-contractors.

7. ACTION PLAN

The Youth Forum is meeting 16th August to talk further about intergenerational project.

AM working with Dementia Action Alliance to help make Northampton a Dementia Friendly town.

AM spoke to Barclaycard to give “Digital Eagles” sessions. Currently there is a session every Monday at the library.

ACTION: To circulate further information about this when available.

Mayor event very successful and there was good attendance. There was a consultation exercise and forums to work more closely together. Propose for Chairs to meet together in September.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OR FORUM ACTIVITIES

CO: Cllr Bottwood to be invited for November meeting to talk about cleanliness of the town.

Andrew Leighton to attend meeting in September to give update about Highways.
PCC and Healthwatch to be invited for future meetings.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

JH: Gave out Care and Repair leaflet about Northampton Home Safety and Support Service.

10. DATE AND VENUES OF FUTURE FORUM MEETINGS

September 22nd, The Jeffrey Room, The Guildhall. 2-4pm.