

Older People's Assembly

**Minutes of Public Meeting held on
Wednesday 7th September 2016, commencing at 1.30pm
Council Chambers, Civic Centre, Southend-on-Sea.**

COMMITTEE:

Mike Grimwade	Chairman	Lynda McLernon	Treasurer
Derek Iles	Vice-Chairman	Molly Dennis	Committee Member
Alan Grubb	Committee Member	Jill Allen-King	Committee Member
Dave Monk	Honorary President		

AGENDA

No	Item	Speaker	Time
1	Welcome, Introduction, Apologies & Declaration of Interests: (All members having a vested interest in items on this agenda should declare their interest if relevant).	Chair/Secretary	5 minutes
2	Minutes & Matters Arising: (1 st June, 2016)	Chair/Secretary	5 minutes
3	Correspondence:	Chair/Secretary	
4	Chairman's Address: The OPA in 2016 and beyond??	Mike Grimwade	5 Minutes
5	Arriva Buses: The latest news from Arriva and an opportunity to speak directly about concerns/views with Arriva's representative	Tracey Williams Operations Manager	25 minutes
6	Trust Links: Matt explains about the charity, its aims, projects and who can benefit.	Matt King Trust Links CEO	20 Minutes
7	Wells Legal Solicitors: An update on Legal Matters for the over 55's	Andrew Wells Wells Legal	20 Minutes
8	Question Time: - Open forum for questions. Advanced notice of subject is an advantage to enable relevant information to be obtained ahead of the meeting to inform the discussion.	An open forum for questions whether related to this agenda or not	Chair discretion on time
9	Close of meeting:	Chair	

Minutes of Public Meeting Wednesday 7th September 2016

Agenda Item 1

Welcome, Introduction Apologies & Declaration of Interests:

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| 1.1 | Mike Grimwade addressed the Assembly and welcomed our guests, members and visitors. |
| 1.2 | Apologies were received from Mike Dolby |
| 1.3 | No declarations of interest were received from the Assembly. |

Agenda Item 2

Minutes & Matters Arising:

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| 2.1 | The Assembly agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 st June 2016 were an accurate account of that meeting, and were duly signed by MG. |
| 2.2 | There were no matters arising. |

Agenda Item 3

Correspondence:

3.1 No new correspondence had been received.

Agenda 4

Chairman's Address:

4.1 MG opened the meeting by explaining that as there was still an ongoing issue for some with discharge from hospital the committee intended to present some valid examples to those responsible for these services and to also attend a hospital meeting on behalf of the OPA where some solid evidence would support the concerns being raised. MG asked those present if they or persons they knew had had recent 'unacceptable' discharge experiences and if so would they be will to share the information without disclosing any confidential information either with the Assembly or privately after the meeting to DI, LMc or MG as this will form part of that future discussion. BG and JAK are also due to attend a meeting at the hospital regarding this on 28th September at 7pm.

4.2 MG made reference to the 'single-page' Assembly Times and reiterated concerns that at present funding for the OPA is uncertain, hence the prudent use of the existing limited funds. MG advised that clearly funding is crucial to the future of the OPA and so there are very real concerns for the organisations future. More active support for the Committee is needed as there are several committee vacancies with only a few that are doing a lot of work. MG appealing for help whether it is as a committee member or for just a specific task. He stressed that as an organisation we are constantly seeking new funding streams so that the OPA can continue to thrive and benefit members. We are a 'no membership fee' organisation therefore all are able to join and thus should encourage membership; it is inclusive and also enables the less active to still have a voice. MG stated that it is crucial that new committee members come forward and we have support for the administration of the orgnasiation. MG invited anyone who might be interested to speak to one of the committee and perhaps come along to a committee meeting to get a better understanding of what's involved.

Agenda Item 5

Arriva Buses:

5.1 Tracy Williams – who is the Operations Manager of Southend Arriva – addressed the Assembly; adding that she has been with the company for 18 months, but in this occupation for 31 years. She was accompanied by Michael Jennings from the regional office. TW announced there will be 18 new double-deckers from 1st October on the Number 1 route following a £4 million investment by Arriva. Also Metro bus magazines available from 3rd October, and a Wayfarer's Issue (software data). At this point MG interjected that during the re-routing of The Fairways traffic, Arriva coped very well however the Woodside residents don't like the re-routed buses as at present there are no double-yellow line restrictions and so making it very congested as well as difficult to cross. TW then announced the following:
Bus #1, #7, #8, #9: (Shoebury to Rayleigh Stn.) Minor time changes made to these routes to improve reliability. On Sundays these routes will provide services between Southend town centre & Asda every 10 minutes.
Bus #4/4a: (Southend to Landwick) These routes have been replaced Mon-Sat by the revised #7 and #8 routes: so more frequency to Great Wakering & Landwick – every 20 minutes – and running via Asda. These also link directly to Thorpe Bay Station, Southend Hospital, Airport and Rayleigh.
Bus #7; #8: (specifically Southend to Shoebury) Daytime frequency will be significantly increased Mon-Sat running every 10 minutes between Southend/Woodgrange Drive/Thorpe Bay Station (with alternate buses going via Station Road/ Maplin Wat North/Bournes Green Chase/ Thorpe Hall Avenue. Hence replacing the above (less frequent) 4 & 4a services.
Blackgate Road; The Angel (North Shoebury Corner) & St. Mary's Church (North Shoebury Road) will no longer be served due to lack of use.

	<p><u>Bus #29: (the old #63 & #13)</u> Improved reliability will ensure buses run every 20 minutes Mon-Sat; though the main change will be extending this route at Temple Sutton to cover Hamstel Road, Archer Avenue, Newington Avenue, Poynings Avenue & Whittington Avenue. Moreover, this whole service has doubled in frequency on Sundays to run every half-hour from Belgrave to Archer Avenue.</p> <p><u>Bus #5:</u> The number 5 route has been withdrawn by Arriva (so route via Leigh Broadway will only be served by the half-hourly #26). This is largely owing to reduced numbers of customers experienced by Arriva, therefore making it 'commercially unsustainable' on part of the route.</p>
5.2	TW said that as many more people have headed to Southend for Summer holidays her colleague MJ is already preparing a Summer Schedule ready for next year.
5.3	<p>BG (member) challenged whether the £100K shortfall statistics were current – referring back to the Bus#5 route – especially given the patronage for this service into Basildon. AG also stated that to take out the #5 would put strain on other services, notably the Southend and Chalkwell routes. TW replied that an amended list had been provided to the Council; the Arriva App is very accurate for bus-tracking. LMc stressed that the #5 was all too often not appropriately scheduled with the #26 or even #21 which covers part of the route to Leigh as often all of these buses arrive at the Hadleigh/ London Road/ Thames Drive area at the same time and so of course the 'last to arrive' had few to pick up!! The route through Leigh via Thames Drive and Canvey Road is now nonexistent as the 21 once at Rectory Grove then turns left and back up to London Road so to reach the far end of Leigh and Leigh Road Areas now need to change buses at rectory grove onto the 26 which is only every half hour having travelled via Leigh station AND these two routes 21 and 26 aren't synchronised to reduce wait time!! MJ responded that as a bus company, they are not allowed to 'talk' to their competitors to ensure service scheduling best meets customer needs!!. LMc also noted the #26 does not run on Sundays, which could particularly affect church-goers. JAK advised that the bus companies do not have the appropriate level of provision for the blind and partially sighted and the withdrawal of #5 is especially poor and restricting for them. The Assembly asked that the #5 withdrawal be reconsidered; TW stressed 'we do not have the final decision'. MS (member) opined that the #5 is 'never on time'; and asked why some of #1 could not be diverted to cover this route. Moreover he demanded to see the figures that substantiate this route's removal.</p>
5.4	<p>CS (member) asked which takes priority – wheelchairs or pushchairs?</p> <p>TW answered that since a pushchair can be folded, drivers would encourage this so accommodating wheelchairs on board but neither takes precedence. DI noted the considerable bulk of some pushchairs that mums insist on bringing onto buses.</p>
<u>Agenda Item 6</u>	
<u>Trust Links:</u>	
6.1	<p>Matt King CEO of Trustlinks explained to the Assembly how Trustlinks evolved as an independent charity established in 2000, and registered an official charity from 2002. They are based at the corner of Fairfax Avenue and Prittlewell Chase note the "Growing Together" project signage. Initially a dumping-ground of overgrown allotments; this area was put to better use by benefitting local people by offering gardening as a therapeutic solution to help those with mental health issues, or who have been discharged from hospital, noting that generating community spaces helps fight boredom. From Monday to Thursday, seed-sowing weeding and pruning may be done. There is also a big vegetable area for chard, sweet corn, courgette, marrow and beets. There are also herbaceous borders and an herb garden as well as four much-loved chickens. Eggs produced there are used for meals made by the staff, and subsidised meals are offered at their Priory Park venue.</p>
6.2	Trustlinks has helped people get over their sense of isolation, and boosted confidence in others via music/ art/ yoga and gardening (as above). Gardens can

	be viewed from 9am – 4pm, all is organically grown, and there is a Christmas Fayre at the end of November. Trustlinks acquired more land at Elm Road Shoeburyness via a grant, and Kiln Road Thundersley (more housing at Pound Road was looked at 4/5 years ago); it has been a huge success, launched early 2013 there is a duck-pond. Trustlinks are able to offer Diplomas in Horticulture via SACC (Southend Adult Community College).
6.3	Trustlinks are also known for working with dementia sufferers, since “nature’s connection is intrinsically important to us” - said MK. St Lawrence Orchard at Eastwoodbury Lane (next to St.Lawrence Park) – which was planted just after WW1 on an acre of land – will be hosting ‘Apple Day’ celebrations in February and October. Trustlinks has also been approached to reinstate the pond at the Mendip Estate, as well as creating a wildlife garden.
6.4	The public can visit on 3 rd Thursday of the month. Trustlinks encourage working with schools (eg Shoebury High) - helping to teach applied learning via cookery, planting things, and organising. Especially effective for people with depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, dementia etc. Trustlinks now support the Southend Carers Forum. There are also many opportunities to volunteer with various aspects to help the charity. Contact them on (01702) 213134 or email office@trustlinks.org .
<u>Agenda Item 7</u>	
<u>Wells Legal:</u>	
7.1	Andrew Wells began by encouraging the Assembly to think about a ‘toolkit’ for legal issues that can be solved and that would save a lot of heartache for the over 55s. AW talked soberly about getting older, ailments, ‘inevitable’ hospital visits, loss of mental ability & ‘memory drift’! AW advised that often, with, for example, pensions and bank accounts only one partner is allowed signatory-rights but is not necessarily the one with mental ability. In this way bank accounts may become frozen which is an inconvenience to a joint account owner without the signatory rights or surviving spouses. Often the only way to unlock this is via a solicitor’s document and Court of Protection Deputyship can be expensive. Therefore setting up a Power of Attorney is the most powerful document to put in place.
7.2	Care fees can be £500-600 minimum per week. Anyone with a capital over £23K is responsible for their care fees- therefore significant bills, which cannot be ignored! AW advised the Assembly to ‘think forward’. He referred to schemes in place that put your house in trust. However the Government pre-empted this in 1986 by the Insolvency Act making it an issue of ‘fraud’ to put any property in trust specifically to avoid for example care-fees. He cautioned members about this as an option.
7.3	AW concluded: (i) Make a Will (ii) Put into plan a Power of Attorney (iii) Get advice and support about care-fees via a solicitor/lawyer. Always seek out those with a <i>breadth of legal knowledge</i> such as Barrister or Solicitor.
<u>Agenda Item 8</u>	
<u>Question Time:</u>	
8.1	BG asked whether OPA can take issue with our bus services via SBC or County Council. MG advised that Council will not subsidise any bus routes.
8.2	BA (member) addressed the Assembly saying “the bus companies are for the public, but are not public services”! He instead suggested approaching the Southend Association of Bus Users group.
8.3	CS stressed there is still too much cycling on the High Street. MG concurred there and in view of the current limited Police presence this is now not seen as a priority by them and in 2015 there was only 1 month of monitoring the footpaths.
<u>Agenda Item 9</u>	
<u>Close of Meeting:</u>	
9.1	Next Public Meeting will be Wednesday 7th December 2016. 2017 dates to be confirmed and published in next newsletter .