

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 31 March 2009 in Brampton Community Centre.

Approximately 24 members were present for lunch and 30 at the meeting.

The vice-chair, Ann Oswin, welcomed everyone to the meeting: 'Magistrates in the community'. She then provided information on all the latest news, updates and campaigns.

- Ali Whitworth now working for the Prevention Team at Age Concern is organising an open afternoon on Thursday 23 April, 10:00 - 13:00 in the Old Town Hall, Carlisle. Tea, buns and information will be available.
- Age Concern have a 1-day conference, 'One voice: shaping our aging society', at the Victoria Park Plaza, London on 7 April. Key speakers include Alan Johnson, secretary of state for health. We have an invitation to attend but the long distance for a 1-day event makes this difficult.
- From 1 April 2009, free swimming sessions for the over 60s are available at the Carlisle Pools. A photograph is needed when you apply for the special card. The Sands Centre will take this for you, or you can take one along to the Pools. More details available on 01228 625 625.
- Help the Aged: a brochure on 'liberty - your rights' is available.
- The latest editions of 'Activate' magazine and the 'Forum to Forum' newsletter are available. Anyone wishing for more information on any of the above items should contact Ann Oswin.

Ann then introduced our two guest speakers, Linda Moth and Alan Burgess.

After each speaker had introduced themselves and given the background of how they had become magistrates, we were given a short quiz to answer in small groups. The questions tested our existing knowledge - in most cases quite limited - about the number of magistrates, the requirements for becoming a magistrate, how often they are required to sit, and their powers. The quiz not only provided factual answers - 48% of the 30000+ magistrates are women, magistrates are not paid but receive expenses, no qualifications are required but there is intensive training, magistrates are required to sit at least 26 times a year, they can impose fines, community service, and custodial sentences up to 6 months - but also provoked many questions from members which provided opportunity for our speakers to recount some anecdotes and to give a personal perspective on local issues.

Ann thanked our guests and the meeting ended with tea.

The next 50+ Forum meeting, the Annual General Meeting, is on 19 May 2009.