

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the AGM held on Tuesday 17 May 2011 in Brampton Community Centre.

18 members were present for lunch and 25 members attended the meeting.

The chair, Ann Oswin, welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented her annual report. Ann thanked treasurer Maureen Granville in her absence and on her behalf presented the year's accounts. During the year the Forum has received a lot of support from Laurel House and some support from Brampton Parish Council. The Forum has £761.59 available in its current account. Maureen is standing down from the Forum committee because of pressure of other commitments.

Other members of the committee were willing to continue and were re-elected with no votes against. No other Forum members present at the meeting volunteered to serve on the committee.

AGM business over, Ann introduced the first speaker, Lana Walker of the Moving On Support Service (MOSS). She explained that the role of the service was to match volunteers with individuals, such as carers, who had lost self-confidence or had become socially isolated and who needed support in establishing contacts with other people or in joining groups or even in just getting out. Referral is by other organisations or by GPs. The organisation provides a structured programme, progress is reviewed and the ending planned to avoid dependency on the volunteer. Contact is at specific times and is made using a MOSS mobile phone; the volunteer is not a friend to be called at any time or to go out with at other times. The age of volunteers ranges from 18 upwards; volunteers are carefully vetted and CRB-checked.

Members' queries were answered and the meeting showed its appreciation in the usual way.

The Chair then gave the dates for several meetings and events:

- 30th June at 7:30pm, Brampton and Beyond Community Trust AGM.
The deadline for nominations for Trustee is 15 June.
Membership of the Trust is free and open to all in the local area.
- 1st - 3rd July: Community Arts and Crafts Exhibition in the Hut.
- 31st August: Age UK Carlisle and Eden photographic competition.

Ann then introduced Catherine Hinson, the Brampton librarian, and the Carlisle and Eden Area Library Manager, Mike Lister. Forum members expressed the concern that the consultation presently being undertaken was a device to justify closures. Whilst there are £80,000 cuts this year and next, closures will be resisted, the aim is to discover the priorities in services as seen by the public and to determine how they can be better provided. In Cumbria there are 30 key libraries and 'library extras' akin to Tesco extras. It was hoped they could provide additional services, be hubs of information, act as support centres. One change would be for staff to go to community groups rather than being tied to buildings. There was discussion about virtual libraries, library links to unstaffed libraries, the housebound service, and links with the RNIB. Brampton library had 30,000 borrowings last year, a high rate for its low weekly opening hours and small size. Suggestions discussed included children reading groups, summer reading challenge, problems of space in Brampton library, collections of books available for adult reading groups, problems of isolated communities. Other groups such as the community trust and the Forum also have difficulty in reaching people and use church magazines and similar methods; it was suggested that the library could use the same method.

After Ann had thanked the speakers, the meeting ended with tea and biscuits in the community café.

The next 50+ Forum meeting is on Tuesday 12th July 2011.