

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 March 2013 in Brampton Community Centre.

18 members were present for lunch and 24 members attended the meeting.

The Chair, Jean Taylor, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Melissa Neall, aromatherapist at Brampton Natural Health Clinic, Main Street. Melissa explained that aromatherapy was the use of essential oils to aid health. She gave reassurance about the safety of essential oils, which have been used for many years. She described the ways that oils can be used, most commonly through application to the skin, and how specific oils can be used to alleviate particular problems. She described the work she does at the clinic - she works on a consultation basis - and the types of treatment on offer. She stressed that there were no side effects if the oils were used correctly by a suitably trained person such as herself, and that at the clinic they tried to provide a holistic treatment.

After a short question and answer period the Chair thanked our guest speaker and the members showed their appreciation in the usual way.

The Vice-Chair, Ann Oswin, then gave some information about local events and updates:

- A carers' conference, open to any carer, is being held at Rheged. A form is available from Ann.
- West Cumbria Age UK have produced a free DVD and activity pack for carers, particularly of the elderly. It includes activities to help conversation and recall happy memories and has suggestions for chair exercises.
- Work has begun on an extension to the Cumberland Infirmary Heart Centre. This will be open 24/7 and provide emergency procedures such as angioplasty. New staff are being recruited.
- The first week of May will be a 'walking week', organised as part of 'Walking for Health' by Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support. There will be several walks in the Brampton area.
- NoWcard travel pass. Members were reminded about renewing their cards if they hadn't already done so.
- An Age UK leaflet giving updates about national projects is available and a booklet 'The cost of cold'. If anyone needs help about keeping warm, Ann can give some useful contacts.

Ann then gave information about the BBCT's recent planning application to build extra-care homes on the community centre site. This was refused by the City Council planning committee. The main reasons given were: over-dominance on neighbouring properties; the removal of three trees; close proximity of trees and layout not appropriate for inhabitants; inadequate parking and access; inadequate space for recycling; buildings out of character. Brampton Parish Council had objected to the plans.

The Trust were surprised at the refusal particularly as they had received support during consultation stages from Cumbria adult social care and Cumbria County Council, whose earmarking of the site for extra-care housing had been a key reason for the development of plans by the Trust. The Carlisle City Council planning officer had been consulted and his comments addressed; his report to the committee recommended approval. The City Council housing department had also been supportive because Brampton is a focus for older people including those in the surrounding area who rely on Brampton for their key services.

This report stimulated a good deal of discussion by Forum members, who have followed the development with interest. Most expressed surprise and concern over the refusal, and a request was made that these views be conveyed in a letter from the Forum to the relevant councillors. Twenty-one signatures were received in support of this at the meeting.

The meeting ended with tea and biscuits.

The next meeting, the AGM, is on Tuesday 21 May 2013.