

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 8th April 2014 in Brampton Community Centre.

12 members were present for lunch and 18 members attended the meeting. Apologies were received from Joan Bailey and Ivan Whetton.

The Chair, Jean Taylor, welcomed everyone to the meeting and Ann introduced Jenny Macleod who told us about the Carlisle Talking newspaper and the history of the national service which was set up in 1970 by Ronald Stuart of Aberystwyth who had seen a similar service in Sweden. Starting by reaching 20 people, 4 years later the national association was formed with the aim of reaching every blind person in the UK.

In 1983 Peter Atkinson of Carlisle Rotary Club formed the Carlisle branch with £50 loans from other members and began the service from an office in Finkle Street.

The group work from a bungalow at Austin Friars School. Seven teams in rotation produce the "newspaper". Every weekend Jenny searches through Cumberland News and Evening Stars to produce the digest, originally recorded on a tape cassette but now on a memory stick. Every Monday the team sorts the returned pouches and erases the previous week's recording, then "Sparks" at the mixer desk and 3-4 readers record an hour of the latest news before sending out by free first class post.

The newspaper which is divided into daily tracks is played on a special radio provided free to members of the service. There are now 2-3 young people involved as volunteers linking with the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. The group works closely with Carlisle Society for the Blind .

Future plans include increasing the farming news and podcasts .

Manned completely by volunteers it is funded by a yearly street collection which also raises awareness. Contact through Carlisle Society for the Blind (tel: 01228 593104).

Jean thanked Jenny for an interesting talk .

Ann provided updates on the neighbourhood care programme, handy man scheme; audience members had had excellent service .

A Zumba gold taster session of exercise had been successful and it is hoped that a regular session will start in May.

The meeting closed with final refreshments.

The AGM is on Tuesday 13 May 2014.