

## **Brampton and District 50+ Forum**

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 25 February 2014 in Brampton Community Centre.

13 members were present for lunch and 21 members attended the meeting. Apologies were received from Joan Bailey.

The Chair, Jean Taylor, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Ann Oswin then gave some updates:

- The bus service to Hilltop Heights in Carlisle (formerly the base for CuDoc and where several activities still take place) has been reinstated for a one month trial.
- Health Watch: if you have heartburn, reflux, problems swallowing, or feel bloated and these symptoms persist for 3 weeks you are advised to see your doctor as they can be signs of oesophageal cancer. There are relatively high rates of cancer in Cumbria.
- The Mayor of Carlisle Charity Concert is on Saturday 5th April. Tickets are £10; three local charities will benefit.
- As part of Fairtrade Fortnight there will a lunch on Shrove Tuesday in the Methodist Hall, Brampton.

Jean Taylor then introduced Tracey Watt, a PCSO (5118) who has worked in Brampton for 16 years, 9 as a Special Constable. Tracey described how the role of a support officer differs from that of a police officer - a different uniform, less equipment. Police Officers are always on the move by car from case to case whereas support officers have more time to talk to people. The Brampton Policing Area is large - 500 square miles - and has a high proportion of isolated properties offering opportunities for theft. Tracey described some of the work she has done in promoting Farm Watch, including the marking of machinery with 'smart water', which has helped reduce the incidence of farm crime to a low level in this area. Tracey and a colleague received a reward for their work and used the cash to buy shed alarms to sell on to the public.

The Brampton Police Station front desk is open 9:00am - 1:00pm from Monday to Saturday and is manned by Linda who is a staff member not a police officer. There is no direct phone line to Brampton. You should dial 101 and though this is answered in Penrith your call can then be re-directed to Brampton. All police vehicles are 'tagged', Penrith knows where all vehicles and officers are at any time so the nearest to an incident or request for help, which may not be the Brampton officers, can be alerted. Tracey described some of the varied aspects of her work - directing traffic in the event of an accident, protecting a crime scene, house to house enquiries, as well as more routine contact with members of the local community.

Every month a local newsletter is produced which contains information about local crimes and arrests made. This is available through the Cumbria Messaging Service - forms available and online (<https://www.cumbriacommunitymessaging.co.uk/>) and through Neighbourhood Watch. Tracey then talked about bogus builders and other doorstep crime. The housebound are particularly at risk often becoming repeat victims. If it becomes known that someone is able to pay cash and is vulnerable their address may be sold on from one criminal to another. The victim is often embarrassed to tell anyone, afraid that admitting vulnerability will be seen as an excuse to move them from their home into residential care. Some cold callers might offer convincing stories and some can be persistent to the point of being intimidating. We were advised never to admit them into the house and when jobs need doing to the house or garden only to use reputable trades-people, preferably someone recommended to you by a friend or relative. Tracey asked us to look out for vulnerable neighbours. At the end of her talk she gave out some security items and leaflets about house security.

Jean Taylor thanked our speaker for a particularly interesting and useful talk and the members showed their appreciation in the usual way.

The meeting ended with tea and biscuits.