

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the annual general meeting held on Tuesday 6 June 2017 in Brampton Community Centre. The meeting took place after lunch in the community café. 21 people attended the meeting; there were 3 apologies.

The Chair, Carol Saunders, welcomed members and the guest speaker, Ian Beattie, of Cumbria Blood Bikes. She then gave a brief report of the activities of the previous year and thanked Laurel House for the grants towards two tea parties and towards the forum's running costs. She also thanked the committee, especially Ann Oswin, for organising meetings and the secretary for maintaining the website. The committee members were introduced to members; all are willing to continue in their current roles. There were two new members present; one is willing to join the committee. An update to the meeting in April: members were told that the minimum age for eligibility for a free passport is 88. There was also feedback from a member expressing appreciation for the help she had received from Age UK representative, Carol Brack, in obtaining a blue badge.

Ian Beattie then gave his presentation about Cumbria Blood Bikes (website: <http://bbcumbria.org/>). This is an autonomous medical courier charity, all members of which are unpaid volunteers. They provide a free out of hours service, 365 days a year, delivering blood, blood products, breast milk, samples, surgical instruments and the like within Cumbria, mainly between the hospitals and from the hospitals to the Air Ambulance based at Langwathby. Some transfers are part of a longer delivery involving handovers with Blood Bikes organisations in neighbouring areas. Ian gave us the history of the organisation both nationally and locally and described the uniform and vehicles the local group employs.

Cumbria Blood Bikes is always looking for volunteers, not just drivers, who have to hold advanced driving qualifications, but also dispatchers, who sort out administration and communication, and fundraisers.

The running costs of the local organisation is £32000 p.a. covering the cost of licences, insurance, servicing, replacement parts and fuel. There are events and awareness days but the group depends on donations from members of the public and the generosity of organisations such as BNFL and the Henry Surtees Foundation. At the end of the presentation Forum members were given the opportunity to make a donation.

After members' questions had been answered the Chair thanked the speaker for his talk.

After the meeting refreshments were available in the café.

The next Forum meeting will be held on Tuesday 25 July 2017.

A summary of the 50+ Forum accounts for the period May 2016 - May 2017 can be found on the 'Updates' page of our website (<http://50plusforum.bramptoncumbria.uk/>).