

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 July 2018 in Brampton Community Centre. The meeting took place after lunch in the community café. 19 people attended the meeting and there were 3 apologies.

Chair, Ann Oswin, welcomed members and the guest speaker, Donald Gowland of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service has 38 fire stations, 6 of which are 'whole time', the remainder, of which Brampton is one, being 'retained'. Because the county has such a large area one difficulty the service faces is the time it takes to get to a fire. We were reminded of some of the more recent incidents that the Fire Service has had to deal with: floods in Carlisle and West Cumbria; large fires in Barrow, at Morrisons in Penrith, at a factory in Maryport. This week, TV pictures have shown a helicopter dropping water on a fire near Thirlmere reservoir. Often, for major incidents, neighbouring services share resources.

Mr Gowland is a home service technician. When he visits homes a questionnaire is completed about the property and about any disabilities or difficulties the occupants might have. In addition to fitting smoke alarms - this is a free service - he can alert the residents to potential hazards, suggest aids such as a vibrating alarm under the pillow for those who are deaf or hard of hearing, and make referrals to social services when appropriate. The information gathered during the visit is made available to the fire crew if there is a fire at the property alerting them to the presence of residents with disabilities and to potential hazards.

Probably because of the recent dry weather Mr Gowland described some of the risks from outdoor barbecues and the basic precautions we should take. He then spent some time outlining some of the basic ways to stay safe in the home, especially when there are young children and pets about: keep pot handles turned in on the cooker; keep matches out of reach; dispose of newspapers safely; remove plastic packaging from pizzas before cooking (a personal incident was related here); make sure the cooker is turned off properly; don't put shopping bags on the hob, especially if the family pet is tempted by the contents to jump up - he related an incident where a dog had accidentally switched the cooker on by doing this. We were also alerted to the risks associated with button batteries, candles, alcohol consumption, and aerosols and gas canisters left in the sun on a window ledge.

We were strongly advised to fit a carbon monoxide alarm if we have an open fire or gas boiler in the house and to use a cabled mains extension block rather than the old-fashioned type of mains adaptor, which has a tendency to overheat.

Members clearly enjoyed the presentation and thanked Mr Gowland for coming to speak to us.

After the meeting refreshments were available in the café.

If you missed the talk or didn't pick up a contact card you can complete the *Safe and Well Visit Assessment* online: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/S3X7QVP> or request more information by phoning 0800 358 4777

The next 50+ Forum meeting is on Tuesday 18 September 2018.