

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 25 February 2020 in Brampton Community Centre. 20 people attended the meeting, which took place after soup and sandwiches in the community café.

Chair, Ann Oswin, welcomed members and the guest speaker, David Moorat, Chairman of Brampton Parish Council.

With the help of on-screen slides Mr Moorat gave members feedback on the results of a recent survey carried out to help form the Brampton Parish Plan. The presentation allowed a lot of interaction with Forum members. Of 2000 questionnaires sent out, only 275 had been returned. To the meeting's surprise we were told that this was considered a normal level of response and 'acceptable'. The majority of responses was from the elderly; this might lead to a skewed interpretation of the results. It might also explain why many of the results corresponded with the views of members present at the meeting.

The survey sought opinions on several topics:

Housing: most respondents thought more housing was needed for the town to survive but this should not be at the expense of green spaces. New houses should be 'affordable' and for people with some connection with the town.

The impact of increased population on medical requirements, education, traffic and roads was recognised. Most respondents thought current medical provision was good or very good but expressed these concerns: problems accessing too many floors of the surgery (though it is located in the town centre near the bus stop); larger premises needed if population increases; no emergency services; no outpatients services; poor relationship between the surgery and the town's chemist; poor mental health services.

94% thought education services in Brampton were good or very good; however, those who thought otherwise were mainly parents with children of school age. There was concern over anti-social behaviour and a perceived over-emphasis on exam results to the detriment of civil responsibility. The lack of provision of out-of-hours activities and of adult education was commented on.

Community areas: Poor maintenance of footpaths; poor lighting along Craw Hall; lack of seats / benches; all were mentioned. Mr Moorat spent some time explaining the present poor state of the town's public toilets, currently the responsibility of Carlisle City Council but not being properly maintained by this body, and the difficulties, mainly cost, in resolving this situation. We were told that many members of the public resort to using the facilities of local cafés; some Forum members felt strongly that there should be public toilets in the town.

Parking: This was a hot topic with many of the conflicting interests discussed: parking close to facilities needed by older people; parking needed to attract people living in outlying villages to Brampton rather than to Carlisle; the lack of space in the centre of town for more parking; the need for extended parking for those having to drive to work in Brampton; park-and-ride as an unworkable and costly solution to town centre parking. Mr Moorat stressed that it is not easy for the council to resolve conflicting requirements. Other topics discussed were: community events; the lack of provision for the youth of the area; the perceived lack of job prospects; the preservation of green space in the town. Planning decisions made by Carlisle City Council sometimes go against local opinion. This can cause difficulties for local councillors.

At the end of the presentation Ann thanked the speaker and members showed their appreciation in the usual way. She then gave details of a 'litter pick' on 24th March organised by the local Walkers are Welcome group.

The next 50+ Forum meeting will be on Tuesday 7 April 2020.