

# Older Persons' Forum (West Cumbria)

STEERING GROUP MEETING

Held on Friday 21st November 2008 at 2pm to 4pm

At Monkway Court, Whitehaven.

1. **WELCOME:** The Chair Ken Taylor welcomed everybody to the meeting including the speaker Mark Newton, Customer Liaison Officer of The Pension Service.

## **Presentation**

Mark stated his job was to make home visits, assessments, and gather information. Pension credits are an allowance available to over 60s to bring income up to a guaranteed minimum it also has a savings created element meant as a reward for those who show intent to help themselves. They were introduced in Oct. 2003 and 2million qualified. It is a means tested benefit and is income related. The first £6000 savings ignored but income from savings assumed to be £40 per week. Owing own property is disregarded. Income made up of State Pension, Private pension, and investments. Minimum income - Single £124.05, Couple £189.35. Definition given for couple. Various questions were asked relating to effect on direct payments for social care, assessments how often, change in circumstances, checks on benefit entitlement, how is Pension credit paid. Concerns were expressed about the complexity of the system of all benefits and payments, the fear factor regarding possible loss of other benefits and pride of older people not wishing to be a burden on the state. All these concerns were noted and should not be there. All providers of benefits should interact to make the complicated system easier for people to obtain what is their right. Various tables relating to benefit calculation, booklets about entitlement were presented. The Chair thanked Mark who was willing to come again and give another presentation. At this point Mark left the meeting.

2. **PRESENT :** Ken Taylor (Chair), Peter Johnstone( Secretary), Christine Johnstone(Treasurer) Margot Fox (Membership), Claire Dobson ( Age Concern), Eva Elliott, Muriel Dinning, Margaret Crabtree & Joe Ditchburn( Allerdale Disability Association), Jean Jones, Gwen Ellwood, John & Dorothy Warbrick, Dot Barwise (West Cumbria Carers), Lyn English(Fire and Rescue Service), Anne Marie Rogan. Mark Pearson(Pension Service), New members - Dorothy Burgess, Betty Roberstson, Helen M Spencer, 4 residents of Monkway Court.

3. **APOLOGIES:** , Pauline Atree, Julie McCaughey( Help the Aged), Isobel Long, Albert & Flo Studholme, Clive & Barbara Monaghan, Tom Hughes.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 17TH OCTOBER 2008:**

The minutes after corrections were agreed as a true and correct record and signed.

5. **MATTERS ARISING:**

Mostly covered by correspondence

1. Presentation by Rural Wheels - ongoing
2. Equality Impact assessments still not received
3. Christmas/New year event-ongoing

6. **CHAIRS' REPORT:** Ken and 7 other members had attended Working Together Conference at Penrith and all agreed a worthwhile event. No expenses had yet been paid. **Secretary following this up.** Unfortunately 8 people attending had received parking tickets including Ken who was parked in a disabled bay and displaying his Blue badge. Secretary and Ken complained and fine eventually dropped.

7. **SECRETARYS' REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE.**

- 1. Letters sent to Mps re: Complaints Handling in Health and Social Care and responses
- 2. E Mail to and response from Keith Parker Acting Director -Quality of Life - Copeland BC re Lift in Multi storey Car Park Whitehaven.

- 3. Letter to Sue Edwards - Signposts re Application for £500.00 administration grant still awaiting grant.
  - 4. Letter to Manager Morrisons Whitehaven re basket/trolley. Response by phone thanking for raising issue. The supply of the shallow trolley was brought in to help with this issue, but would look into list of baskets/trolleys available.
  - 5. Information from Help the Aged stating that now more than 33% of older people including half of all women over 65 live alone.
  - 6. Information From Help the Aged re complaints about Private Dental Care where to go for advice etc.
  - 7. For Information; Review of Older People's Engagement with Government. **John Warbrick to find out from Labour Party contact details of Joan Bakewell**
  - 8. Notice of 2 Day event by Care & repair Housing Action Workshops. No interest shown.
  - 9. Notice of Communities that Work Conference 12th December. Ken and Margot will attend.
  - Secretary gave information about Help the Aged Collections at B&Q. The arrangements and conditions applied were discussed and it was decided not to proceed with this as the idea was to heighten our profile as well as raise money..
  - Reported on meeting he and Treasurer had attended at which Cumbria Care Home of Choice Policy and Guidance had been reviewed. Awaiting update.
8. **TREASURER' REPORT:** Christine reported that we were still within budget.

9. **MEMBERS REPORTS:**

**MEMBERSHIP:** Margot reported 3 new members joined today making 30

**AGE CONCERN:** Claire reported new resource centres at Workington and Egremont now open available for us to use. New campaign to relieve Poverty "Heat or Eat" at drop in centres OCH 25th, St. Michaels 26th, Millom 27th November.

**STROKELINK:** Christmas Party 1st December.

**BGOP/OPAG:** next Meeting 26th November at Preston hoped to attend.

**ADA:** Margaret reported new Shop Mobility Scheme housed at the Parksafes Car Park Workington opens at 10am 1st December Tel No 07778510342

**CRIME PREVENTION:** No report

**FIRE AND RESCUE:** Lyn reported now had another advocate for drugs and alcohol. Increases in Burglary and bogus callers.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

Secretary stated that there maybe another £100.00 coming from Help the Age for help towards Christmas/ New Year party, venue, cost etc. still being looked into

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

**16th January 2009**  
**at 2pm**  
**at St. Michaels Centre, Corporation Rd,**  
**Workington**

The meeting was then closed.