

Reference Group on Older People

Monday, 24th February, 2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE REFERENCE GROUP ON OLDER PEOPLE

Members present: Alderman Copeland; and
Councillors McMullan and Smyth.

In attendance: Mrs. G. McEvoy, Senior Environmental Health Officer;
Mrs. A. Allen, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Ms. K. Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mrs. E. Greer, Senior Project Development Officer; and
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Heading.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 5th November, 2019 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest were reported.

Leisure Centres and Older Peoples Programmes – Presentation by Noel Munnis, BCC Partnership Manager

Mr. N. Munnis provided the Working Group with an update on the leisure transformation programme, with particular reference to the programming and facilities available for older people. He referred to a number of areas which were being addressed by GLL, including programming for older people's activities and communication in regard to activity timetabling associated with pool opening and closing times. The Members were informed that membership at the Council's new leisure facilities had grown substantially over the past two years and that membership, by the over 60s, comprised 19% of the total membership.

The Partnership Manager referred to the Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) funded by the Public Health Agency (P.H.A.) and operated by GLL and, in particular, the fact that the contractual twelve week P.H.A. intervention programme had been extended by the Council/GLL, free of charge, for a continuation period of twelve weeks, with reduced pre-paid monthly membership fees for the following three years. He stated further that the majority of people on the PARS programme were in the over sixty age group. The Partnership Manager informed the Working Group that the Council was continuing to provide a shuttle bus service from Avoniel Leisure Centre to the Lisnasharragh leisure complex and referred to the advertising campaign to encourage an improved take up of that service. He stated that, in order to relieve pressure in regard to pool based activities, it was proposed to extend the opening hours for the diving/learner pool during the early morning period. He stated also that it was anticipated, once Templemore Baths reopens in 2022, pressures associated with pool programming, at Lisnasharragh, would be relieved further.

The Working Group thanked the Partnership Manager for his update and he departed from the meeting.

Update by Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager

Ms. Gilliland and Ms. Allen (Neighbourhood Services Managers) provided the Working Group with an update on work undertaken, at community level, in terms of community engagement and regeneration. She referred to the importance associated with the development of local area plans to ensuring that those plans were reflective of the objectives contained within the Belfast Agenda. She reported that an Integration Manager had been appointed to coordinate the work of the area development plans and his role associated with the integration and coordination of that work including, amongst other initiatives, the Council's Open Spaces and Street Scene Strategy. The Working Group was informed also that work in respect of the community provision review had commenced.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Working Group, thanked the Neighbourhood Services Managers on the work which had been undertaken as part of the community engagement and regeneration programme.

Update on Age-friendly Belfast

The Senior Environmental Officer provided an overview of the forthcoming events in regard to the Age-friendly Belfast Older Volunteer Awards. She provided a list of the successful candidates under the various categories listed including the :

- Marie Matthews Participation Category
- Contribution to City Life Category
- Team Award and
- Older Volunteer of the Year Award.

In regard to the Age-friendly Belfast 'Be Prepared' Event which had been held on 4th February, 2020, it was reported that over 350 people had attended and that the event had provided practical advice on a wide range of topics, including health and wellbeing, housing and home safety. She stated further that thirty-two organisations had been represented at the event. The Members were informed of a number of events which would be taking place as part of the St Patrick's Day celebrations. She referred to the two tea dances which would be held on 17th March, as part of that celebration, and the fact that older people would be taking part in the parade. The Senior Environmental Manager stated that a 'Happy to Chat' bench campaign had been launched to encourage people to improve their social interaction with each other, one of which had been located in St. George's Market. She stated further that it was hoped that a further bench would be located in the grounds of the City Hall in the Spring of 2020.

In response to a question from a Member regarding the number of organisations signed up to the Pharmacy Charter, the Senior Project Development Officer agreed to bring a report back to the next meeting of the Working Group. In relation to a further question regarding dementia awareness, she stated that there would be a number of dementia awareness training sessions provided for GLL staff and that further dementia awareness training for Members would be arranged as requested previously. The Working Group enquired as to what support was provided in respect of debt advice and the Senior Environmental Health Officer, in response, agreed to invite Age NI advice line personnel to the next meeting of the Working Group to share with the Members the work they had undertaken in that regard.

Noted.

Dementia Friendly Belfast Celebration Event

The Senior Project Development Officer referred to the forthcoming Dementia Friendly Belfast Celebration Event which would be held the City Hall on 3rd March, 2020. She referred to a number of creative activities scheduled to be held as part of that event including:

- Dementia friendly crafts
- Singing for the Brain
- A cookery demonstration and
- Circle Time with School Children's Art Project.

She stated further that Dementia Friendly Neighbourhoods had hosted a number of performances of the play 'Songbirds' in local venues, and she provided the Working Group with an invitation to attend a future performance to be held on Thursday, 12th March in the Duncairn Centre at 2.30 p.m.

Noted.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group agreed that its next meeting would be held on Monday, 18th May, 2020 at 12.30 p.m.

Chairperson